

# MIENNONITE

## Historical Bulletin

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### PSALM 78

Mäs'-chil of Ä'-säph.

**G**IVE ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:

3 Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.

4 We will not hide *them* from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.

*Psalm 78:1-4: Riddles of old things. The King James Bible and The Froschauer Bible.*

### Ser LXXVII. Psalm.

Hebr. LXXVIII. Psalm.

Ein bericht Asaph.

Es ist ein red an das volck Israels/darinn sy genant werdend/das sy/angesehen das liden vnd straff irer vätter/volder ansehnd recht vor Gott wandlen.

**H**ör: O mein volck mein gsatz / neigend zu were vren hi der red meines munds.

† Ich wil meinem mund zu spruchen aufschün: räterschen von alten dingen wil ich hārfür bringen.

† Die wir gehört habend / vnd deren wir auß der sag vnserer vätter wol berichte sind.

Das wirs jren kunden der nachkommenden wält nit verhaltind / sunder die eer des Herren aufkundind/seinen gwalt/vnd seine wunderbaren werck die er gethon hat.

## "The Riddle of Things Past": A Meditation

by John L. Ruth

The writer of Psalm 78 proposes to speak of "dark things." Luther translates it as "riddles of old things" (*räterschen von alten dingen*.)

Riddles of old things are dark in two senses. Old things are dim because of their distance from our time. Origins are hard, if not impos-

sible, to understand. And second, "The dark places of the earth," to quote another Psalm, "are filled with cruelty." Thus the past we probe to appreciate God's great works is full of things to be regretted, things that don't fit our present mores. Things, even in the Bible, that we don't approve of. Things in our own past which do not please us.

The Book of Revelation shows us

a writer puzzled by his own vision. John tells us he "wept much" because there was no one capable of opening a book that contained the meaning of history. This weeping represents our existential need to understand the riddle of human existence, the story of which we are characters.

In my own surveying of life in the two oldest American Mennonite



conferences, I've noted the persistent emotion of yearning for access to the book of history. There is a wistfulness for and relief in learning a person's story. While my most recent manuscript has been incubating, I've gotten impatient letters from people who say they need it so that they can place their own family stories in context. I have often gone to funeral memorial meals, simply to offer the healing balm of memory.

Without story, something within our hearts and communities starves. Clifford Geertz, in a review of Jerome Bruner's recent *The Culture of Education*, notes its conclusion that "Growing up among narratives . . . is the essential scene of education—'We live in a sea of stories.' Learning how to swim in such a sea, how to construct stories, understand stories, classify stories, check out stories, see through stories, and use stories to find out how things work or what they come to, is what the school, and beyond the school the whole 'culture of education,' is, at base, all about. The heart of the matter is that 'human beings make sense of the world by telling stories about it—by using the narrative mode for construing reality. . . .'"<sup>1</sup>

In working on two conference histories, I've reflected on a paradox in our eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite memory. On the one hand, our people were full of history, and on the other most did little or nothing to consciously record it. The record may be quickly summa-

rized. In 1727, within decades of their arrival, they had placed a version of their history before the public in an appendix to their Confession of Faith containing an essay of 1664 by the Dutch Tieleman T. van Sittert. In this van Sittert argued that the violent Münsterites had been an aberration from the

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peaceful streams of Dutch Mennonites and Swiss Baptists, from whom governments had less than nothing to fear.

By 1742, the parental longing of Pennsylvania Mennonites was calling forth the publishing of a German translation of the *Martyrs Mirror*. At the same time they reproduced in their hymnal the 1645 *Berichte* of Jeremias Mangold, narrating the persecutions of their great-grandparents in the Canton of Zurich. But alas, when Morgan Edwards of Philadelphia published a history of Baptist-related commu-

nions in Pennsylvania in 1770, he reported little "readiness" among the Lancaster Mennonists to give him the statistics he sought. They seemed suspicious, he observed, that if others had information about them it might "be to their prejudice."<sup>2</sup>

In 1773 the Franconia bishops wrote that they had been too busy to keep records—all they had was a page from their first bishop, who had died ten years earlier, taking them up to the year 1712 in Germantown. A Mennonite from Hamburg trying to piece together a record of his clan's American diaspora did elicit from a woman at Skippack—Magdalena van Sinteren Kolb—the first American Mennonite genealogical roster. But for over a century thereafter one finds very little surviving record-writing among Magdalena's people in Pennsylvania.

There is certainly evidence of living oral tradition. In 1826 school-teacher-historian-translator I. D. Rupp, of the Reformed faith, was able to take notes on Lancaster Mennonite memories, even though the stories were already somewhat shaky. A few years later we find Deacon John Lederach of Salford (in the Franconia Conference) telling German visitor Jacob Krehbiel that "the documents dealing with the original American ordination [1698/1708] at Germantown were still preserved in Germantown." The deacon had often thought, he

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said, that he should ask for these papers, to be kept for historical reasons "in one of our congregations in Montgomery County."<sup>3</sup> But it would be over a century before his descendants would take the trouble to gather documents systematically.

In such correspondence as has survived one finds occasional intriguing comments on concerns brought from the old country. As late as the 1880's there were fragments of legend afloat in our community about our memorable schoolteacher Christopher Dock, who had died a century earlier. But the connections became so tenuous that even an intelligent progressive like John H. Oberholtzer in 1849 knew little history. He did not know who his American pioneer ancestor of 1732 was, nor even his own grandmother's first name. He imagined that one reason there had been so little "*Gelehrsamkeit*" (learning) among his American ancestors was that danger from the "tomahawks" of "wild" Indians on the frontier had made an orderly life difficult.<sup>4</sup> He wrote in the vaguest of generalizations about the "Franconia Conference," which he viewed as formed just in the generation previous to his.

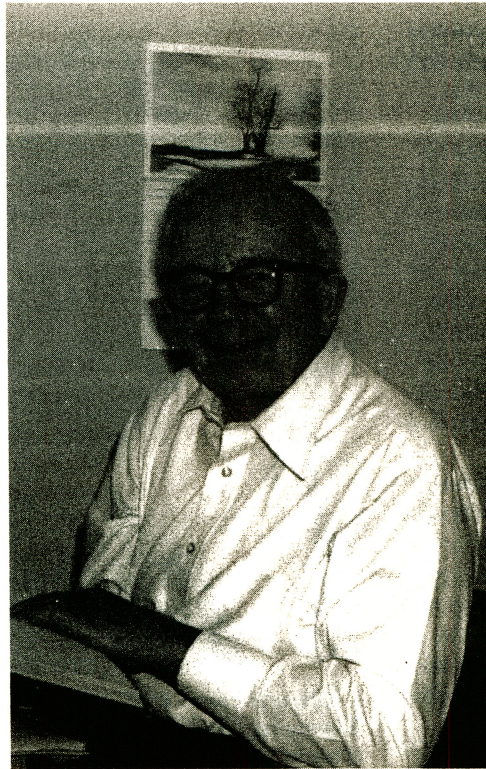
Benjamin Eby of Ontario, a native Lancaster Countian, did pull together a survey of Mennonite history in 1841, and I. D. Rupp tried to do the same a few years later in his *Original History of the Religious Denominations . . . of the United States* (1844). But the Lancaster Conference's most intelligent leader, Bishop Christian Herr, supplied to Rupp only a quite unoriginal and hazy overview, with the Dordrecht Confession of Faith.

Controversies such as those of the Montgomery County "Funkites" of 1777-1811, the Lancaster "Herrites" of 1812, and the Groffdale community in the 1840's all left paper trails valuable to historians. These survivals remind us of an issue of balance which historians must deal with. It became personal for me in the comment of an old

mentor, Noah G. Good, after he had read a version of my forthcoming manuscript, *The Earth Is the Lord's: A Narrative History of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference*. "I get the impression," wrote Noah, "that so much space is given to recording bitterness and quarrels because you can get hold of that, and the quiet, sober growth gets little emphasis. Perhaps this is so natural that it cannot be avoided, but I feel I get a distorted picture of tension. These things are all so very true, much too true to be missed or avoided; but are we missing something because it did not produce noise?" Again: "This is church history. It needs to be told as it was. [But] even at this long time afterwards we must be careful not to rankle or stir up old sores. Is this what we want to say?"

My generation is not as afraid of examining "old sores" as Good's. And I tend to go with what I consider the biblical model, which has the advantage of letting the readers feel that they are getting more than one side of the story. But I am very much concerned with his question, "Is this what we want to say?" One is always choosing what one wants to say about the past.

In 1856 I. D. Rupp went through ship records kept after 1727, and published his *Collection of Thirty Thousand Names* of Pennsylvania German pioneers. This was a helpful beginning, but already so much had been forgotten that the names themselves could hardly provide any "picture." By the time of the



Noah G. Good, teacher, historian and critic: Is our story "intended to be amusing, or is it an illustration of God working in spite of human hindrances?"

Source: MHB Photo File, 1991, Archives of the Mennonite Church.

Civil War, our people had effectively lost the story of their great-grandparents' migration. Those few who still knew it were not writing it.

In 1864, John L. Delp of Chalfont wrote plaintively to the new *Herald of Truth*, "I have for some time been trying to collect some of the early history of our Church in Pennsylvania . . . but thus far I have met with rather ill success." Delp hoped that others who were "better informed" might "bring to light what appears to be so much in the dark in our country."<sup>5</sup> In the same year miller Isaac Tyson of near Royersford mourned, "My poor heart often feels sorry that so little is known about our ancestors. All the old people are gone, and no one is here anymore to give me the desired information. What might have been handed down to the coming generation with ease is now out of reach. . . ." Isaac then joined the River Brethren whose historians have precious little written record of the origins of their own fellowship in the late 1770's.

In this vacuum, other voices spoke. The Reformed Mennonites



certainly did a better job of explaining their birth than did the larger body of 19th century Mennonites with their own story. But other interpretations tended to confuse our own self-perception. In my community J. K. Harley, the worldly son of a Brethren preacher at Indian Creek, wrote a little history of Montgomery County for the public schools, in which he set the meaning of our region primarily in terms of what the American Revolution had done for it. There was nothing at all about our people's spiritual life.<sup>7</sup>

Amusingly, when one looks with the eyes of a local at the actions of General George Washington while he was staying at the home of a Mennonite miller on our Perkiomen Creek, a revealing historical irony emerges. One of the "dark things" historians like to mention is that our Mennonite farmers were loath to sell their produce to Washington's Army for fear that its paper Continental money would not reflect the full worth of their butter and veal. Rather, they carried produce on their backs to Philadelphia, where the occupying British Army had the King's gold to buy proven-der. This is offered as an illustration of a crassness unable to recognize the emerging noble dream of an independent America. But if so, what about the instructions Washington himself, while at Pennypacker's Mill, wrote home to a relative in Virginia? When the agent would rent some real estate the General owned, he was to make sure that any currency used would allow the Father of his County to "really, and not nominally, get what was intended as a rent."<sup>8</sup>



C. Henry Smith in 1926. He found among Lancaster Mennonites "thrift . . . industry . . . charm . . . [but] no records." Credit: C. Henry Smith Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church.

A century later, while Americans were inspiring themselves with fables of "Washington praying at Valley Forge," came the first stirrings among Mennonites to recover the memory of their ancestry. But prolific genealogist A. J. Fretz, who began his search in 1880, lamented that he "should have . . . begun years ago, while there were yet living those of the third generation, who could have given more satisfactory information of the early ancestors . . . but which with their demise is forever lost. Already the ancestral thread was lost to many who were unable to trace their lineage farther than to the grandfather. . . ."<sup>9</sup>

Although in 1895 the story of our Bernese past was sympathetically laid open by the Reformed Pastor Ernst Müller at Langnau, using Dutch records,<sup>10</sup> when A. D. Wenger of Lancaster came through Langnau five years later, he could not recognize the historical story spread around him. Nor did M. G. Weaver use Müller's essential account when he published his own

history of Lancaster Mennonites in 1931. And strangely, we of the 1990's have still not done our homework on this, *i.e.*, we have not systematically translated the rich collection of correspondence involving our Swiss/Palatine ancestors, still awaiting our mature attention in the Mennonite Archives in Amsterdam. (Author's note: Since giving this talk, I am happy to report that a significant initiative is under way to correct this historic neglect.)

In 1906 young Illinois native C. Henry Smith, who had been teaching at Goshen College and was researching his Ph.D. thesis (*Mennonites of America*) for the University of Chicago, was bemused by his experience with the Lancaster Mennonites. In a stay of several weeks in what he called the "original nest of the Pennsylvania Mennonites," the midwesterner found the scene to be "one of the most charming as well as the most prosperous rural bits in all America." With hardly a weed in the fields, the "substantial stone houses and capacious red barns full of well-groomed horses and well-fed cattle . . . spelled thrift and industry in every detail." But in the midst of "the charm of the landscape and the fine hospitality of the people," Smith could find "no records" to consult nor even grave-stones for the first settlers. He concluded somewhat understandably though prematurely that "the Mennonites here . . . were not much interested in their ancestry."<sup>11</sup>

This seemed true again in 1910, as historians gathered at the Willow Street Mennonite Meetinghouse to celebrate the Bicentennial of the first white settlers' arrival in what had become Lancaster County. The local Mennonites actually tried to distance themselves from what they considered a worldly and inappropriately proud observance. While "the religious meaning" of "our 200 years" was left to the oratory of secularized descendants, the Mennonite leaders were occupied with concerns about the clothes



requirements for participating in communion. After the celebration, they expressed "sorrow" at Conference that such a proud "anniversary display & Celebration" had taken place at one of their meetinghouses. "Such things," recorded Bishop Benjamin Weaver, are "unbecoming for us. We hope they may never be repeated on our church grounds any Place."<sup>12</sup>

But that same year of 1910 had seen the beginnings of two decades of research on Lancaster Mennonite history by scrivener Martin G. Weaver. By the time his *Mennonites of the Lancaster Conference* appeared in 1931, the yearning for the lost story had grown quite wistful. Bishop Noah H. Mack was pleased with what Weaver had been able to construct around a core of brief congregational sketches, but in his "Introduction" commented, "What a volume of family history" our ancestors "could have conveyed to us, but they are all silent, and the

past gives us no answer. . . ."<sup>13</sup> Author Weaver himself confessed to wondering how it was "that our fathers all passed so quietly . . . without telling us more about their trials, experiences, and triumphs." It would have been "important and uplifting," he thought, to "know more about the privations and hardships which tried their souls, and of their successful efforts in preserving their faith so precious to them. . . ."<sup>14</sup>

A similar complaint was that of progressive Lancaster Mennonite John Hershey Mellinger, writing in the 1940's. "I am unable to learn anything," he wrote, "of the Mellinger ancestry beyond my grandfather."<sup>15</sup> The ancestor in question, born in 1790 in Manor Township and farming in Strasburg Township after 1815, had apparently left his descendants with no connection to family lore. A great language-change stood like a Chinese Wall between his understanding and the quiet era before the days of factories and higher education. No wonder an author of a history of the Byerland congregation, "forced . . . to condense her research to a ten day period," would entitle her book *Out of the Silent Past*.<sup>16</sup>

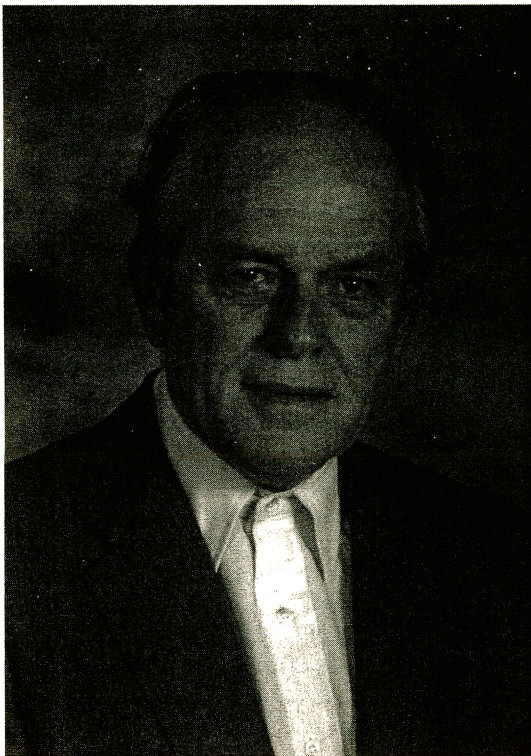
Thus for most of two centuries our people lived without access to even the outlines of the founding of their American communities. That story lay obscured amidst vague and often misleading phrasings like "bloody persecution," "the briny deep," "seven brothers who came across," "savage Indians," "primeval forests," and "a sheepskin from William Penn." The way our own projected scrim patterns what we see in the past is neatly illustrated in the "Wall of Memory" placed in our Heritage Center at Harleysville several years

ago. Stones from here and there in our experience were supplied to a mason, who mortared them into a pleasingly variegated formation. The memory was solidly there. But was it? The granite block that one of our first African American members had chiseled out was now unrecognizable, since its corner had been knocked off to fit a non-square slot. The bit of African petrified wood, in the shape of its continent, had been flipped to fit another opening, which made it resemble South America instead. And an Indian pestle had been inserted the long way to fit a narrow opening, leaving only the blunt end showing, so that the profile of its functioning was invisible. Having been set to *our* pattern, those stones of memory had no voice.

Part of the historian's work is to make one story out of many stories. Although any human family needs this, in doing more imposing than listening we design inauthentic family crests—the American one-size-fits-all, mail-order family history that can be bought when there is no real memory.

I live on the remnants of an old farm. No matter how much renovating or cleaning up we do, the detritus of 160 years persists. Periodic farm auctions, when everything was sold, have far from eradicated all the evidence of what happened here. Load after load of old iron has been hauled away, pile after pile of wood gone through the Franklin stove: beam, brace, cornice, crate, dowel, jamb, joist, lath, lintel, moulding, panel, plank, rafter, rung, shingle, sill, stud, wainscot. What a susurrus of whispered voices from the fireplace! Then there are initials and dates scratched in wood or stone! Year after year they tell me about what my grandparents knew, placing my life in the perspective of theirs.

I *perceive* differently when I walk from the modern addition of our house to the older side, where I am transferred out of the end of the 20th century into a more organic-



John L. Ruth, author, historian, pastor: "Looking for the fundamental themes of history . . . from among the distracting welter of more obvious imagery."



feeling ambiance. A dropped marble rolls on the old floor, the walls are not abstractly plumb. The plaster has hog's hair in it. The cellar steps are worn irregularly concave around the dense wood of knots, forcing me to feel, especially if barefooted, with those who descended and climbed here over five lifetimes.

In the old attic, I must walk with lowered head. Dark aureoles on the floor mark the drip of smoked hams through winters that never dreamed of supermarkets crammed with a gross array of pre-processed delicacies from around the globe. Sometimes these darker rooms give me the creeps. They challenge me seriously to transcend my provincial absorption in the end of the 20th century. They insist, if I will listen, that my time too is an interval, a transition. My artifacts too are quickly replaced by sleeker, more digital ones. When I stand with head necessarily bowed in these humble spaces, I look at "history" and its contents differently than when pecking at a keyboard to extract information from an electronic databank.

I've mentioned the fear of worldliness that influenced the 1910 Lancaster County Bicentennial. Interestingly, when the Mennonites themselves gathered again at Willow Street in 1960 for the 250th anniversary, and could name the topics for themselves, the main speaker chose to dwell on a historical review of "nonconformity." The same man, Bishop J. Paul Graybill, tried very diligently to stamp that interpretive principle on the thinking of a committee that soon began to project a history to get beyond the bounded 1931 chronology of M. G. Weaver. Sitting on that committee was Noah Good, who would outlive Graybill and bring his perspective to bear on the new history.

After perusing my manuscript, Good expressed surprise. "As our Publication Committee sat together many hours," he recalled, "we saw the history as a rather serious thing

in prospect. We idealized many of the leaders as persons of serious and spiritual character. You have been successful in ferreting out so many amusing incidents that we never thought of when we first contemplated this work." Good's choice of the word "amusing" brought me a mild shock. Having tried so hard to get beyond the former limitations of pious lists, had I fallen into a merely entertaining mode? Had I spoken at so many congregational anniversaries that the need to catch listeners' attention had moved me too close to humor?

Good continued: "This does make the story more factual and realistic. [But] Is the leadership contest between John Mellinger and his group and the rather staid and outmoded bishop body intended to be amusing, or is it an illustration of God working in spite of human hindrances? So often the human or amusing aspect is highlighted more than the less tangible aspect of seeking God's leading. I am rather sure this emphasis will capture the attention of many readers. Will the reader be influenced for or against the Conference and its work by reading this book? I would hope that each serious reader would come away from this book with deeper appreciation than before."

On that last note, I could not have been in more agreement. But the difference of stance of two persons who love the Church of Christ and its story, one born in 1904 and the other in 1930, is definitely in play here. I devoutly hope that future readers will appreciate Robert Frost's dictum that they must recognize the inward seriousness of what may be said with outward humor.

Perhaps the most obvious force that turn things past into riddles is the simple stark process of loss that leaves every community with its horror stories. From my own old community, six decades ago, many important materials went to the Bluffton College Library hundreds of miles distant. In two swift visits

there I found uncatalogued John Oberholtzer manuscripts, N. B. Grubb correspondence, and hymnals with forgotten inscriptions, but missed a set of revealing Abraham Hunsicker letters to Oberholtzer which would have thrown sharp light on the 1847 division I was trying to interpret. In Lancaster County the crucial "Pequea" Christian Herr family papers turned to mush in a barrel under a leaky attic roof. The papers of John Shenk, Secretary of the "Russian Committee," were thrown out, and those of Treasurer Gabriel Bear were carelessly burned only weeks before historians came looking for them. You can provide illustrations from your own communities.

Yet in all our struggle with the riddles of our past, we find it unexpectedly disclosing rich meaning. To quote T. S. Eliot, "What the dead had no speech for, when living, / They can tell you, being dead: the communication / Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living."<sup>17</sup> And in a strange way time itself becomes the historian's ally. For time is not only a distorting, but a focusing lens. To change the metaphor, time sieves away a lot of litter, thus letting us concentrate on a few themes, rather than an incomprehensible clutter of data. The closer the period we write about, the harder it is to see what is of lasting importance. On the other hand, whatever evidence survives the rude wasting of old time stakes a special claim to our attention.

Another paradox I've often reflected on is the way a parochial community like mine, which has come only very late to its historical self-interpretation, and is thus comparatively penalized by having to scrounge its evidence from sparse, neglected sources, nevertheless has an advantage. That is, where there has persisted an unusual sense of spiritual family, even where records have been few, they can be disproportionately gathered. Thus the forming of many Mennonite



archives across this country since 1950 has been enhanced by an unusual awareness of where people have gotten to. If you doubt this principle, I advise you to visit the Muddy Creek Farm Library assembled by Old Order Mennonite farmer Amos B. Hoover since the 1960's, and see what persistence and imagination—and love for the heritage—have accomplished, out of all normal scale.

Beyond this, of course, the copying/ digital revolution is now erasing distance and unavailability, bringing us closer to our forbears' thoughts as we move farther away from them in chronological time.

forbears, in their repetitive stroking of the earth or caressing of the fabric on their spinning wheels and looms, were engaged in the same drama he was rediscovering. It was this evocation of a wordless depth that powerfully draws those who recognize it to Warren's subtly shaded canvases. As he would stare at a plowed field until it glowed on his canvas, so I have found that even the "quiet in the land" part of our heritage yields meaning in proportion to the intensity of the interpreter's attention.

The riddle of things past often turns out to be the familiar but unexamined reality of the very

itself—"the foundation of the earth." For thoughts such as this the shallower word "riddle" must give way to cosmic *Mystery*. Something basic was indeed brought to Moses's people—God "established a testimony in Jacob." But something greater was established when a Special Person emerged in that people's story. The life and death and resurrection of this Person brings to focus the stories of all tongues, tribes and nations. To see this, our vision must be, as the writer of Hebrews put it, "mixed with faith."

Lesslie Newbigin has recently written that "The community of the

*The riddle of things past often turns out to be the familiar but unexamined reality of the very moment from which we try to look back. The more we reflect on the paradoxes of history, the more recognizable the strangeness of our own moment becomes.*

In the riddles of our past we find our own issues foreshadowed. For example, the unresolved fracturing of Menno Simons' spiritual family in the Netherlands is a commentary on our own multiple groupings, all still claiming Menno's name. The repeated departures from our own covenanted body toward other models of Christianity are re-experienced today. The gradual, drawn out process of compromising our forbears' blood-bought espousal of Christian nonresistance, finds ever new occasion and form.

On another level, my old friend Warren Rohrer (recently deceased Philadelphia artist with roots in Lancaster County), surprised himself and those who appreciated his increasingly abstract painting, by an atavistic tendency to imitate the gestures of his inexpressive Mennonite ancestors. He had come to realize, he observed, that his inarticulate

moment from which we try to look back. The more we reflect on the paradoxes of history, the more recognizable the strangeness of our own moment becomes. And the more deeply we muse, the more likely we are to see the fundamental themes of history rising like those designs that entertain our children—configurations that emerge, depending on how our eyes focus, from among the distracting welter of more obvious imagery.

The Lion/Lamb of Revelation reappears in the horrific experience of Rwanda, ironically the most Christianized of African countries. Here, in the matrix of the East African Revival whose reflex influenced Lancaster Mennonite spirituality, the first to be killed were the most spiritual Christians. With the eye of faith, the Lion of the Dark Past is revealed as really the Lamb, whose sacrifice is rooted in Creation

Christian church" is incomprehensible apart from its story. Its two basic themes of creation and redemption are presented in narrative form. It was actually the biblical narrative, muses Newbigin, that "made Europe a cultural entity distinct from Asia, of which it was and is simply a peninsula."<sup>18</sup>

The church is shaped, Newbigin holds, by the story it bears. But do we know that story beyond superficiality? Several years ago my wife Roma composed a "fraktur" representation of the vision in Revelation 5, based on a conception of the Flemish artist Hans Memling in the 1590s. Most visitors to our dining room, where it hangs, don't linger long over the depth meaning of the Fraktur, centered as it is around a seven-horned Lamb in a circle of singing elders. Having admired the intricacy of the drawing, guests tend to ask less, "What does it



mean?" than "How long did it take you to make it?"

Similarly, sometimes after I tell a string of stories, hoping with outward humor but inward seriousness to flesh out and make palpable the fellowship of our forbears in the faith, listeners ask not about the meaning of our dialogue with those forbears, but "Where do you get all these stories?"


Another effect I muse on is how so often historians give us interpretations of church life as a set of interweaving ideas built around a very skimpy story line. On the Internet's "MennoLink," there is a stimulating flow of ideas, interpretation and debate, but a fairly low quotient of story. When story does appear there, it often has a bracing impact. Many of the interpretive patterns on the "Link" have a resonance of the academy, where schemata abound. In such a context a comment of Arnold Snyder, a teacher himself, is wise: "It appears that the love of Christ as revealed in His words and His life provides a heuristic principle that survives the interpretive predilections of any age." Just as insightfully he adds, "One lesson of history is hard to miss: Christians should exercise a profound dose of humility concerning what they claim to know, biblically and spiritually. This humility needs to be exercised especially in our relations with those who disagree with us."<sup>19</sup>

In other words, there is a humble stance of faith from which even the dark riddles of the past can disclose spiritual meanings.

It was in 1990 at Harleysville that we built our new Mennonite archives, a treasury of things both bright and dark: ledgers, singing school books, hymns, deeds, letters and diaries. Here one could commune with the past in the mood of poet Czeslaw Milosz: "At Salem, by a spinning wheel, / I felt I, too, lived yesterday."<sup>20</sup>

As a volunteer community gathered one evening to landscape the new grounds, I was touched by the

sight of this circle of work and hope, caring about what our fathers and mothers had told us about God's doings among us. Of course here, in our storing and cherishing the sayings of our heritage, we hadn't gotten everything right. Our "Wall of Memory" already obscured some of the very truth we were hoping to testify to. But it was all done as an offering, a sign that we wanted to tell the story that God's covenant had been known here for a quarter-millennium. It was high time we did this. People moving in from every direction were building around us in patterns reflecting no focused memory. They too needed our story. Perhaps it would become spiritually theirs, by adoption.

As we worked through lowering weather, the sun was setting behind us over the Moyer homestead of 1717, soon to become a Wal-Mart. How dark that home's history would become! But just then a rainbow appeared. As my friends worked on, I walked backward for an overall look at the scene, and sure enough, I could find a stance from which our house of memory was serenely arched by a rainbow of promise. 

John L. Ruth presented this meditation at The Riddle of Things Past Conference, Harrisonburg, Va., May 9, 1997.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Clifford Geertz, "Learning with Bruner" (review article on Jerome Bruner's *The Culture of Education*), *The New York Review of Books*, April 10, 1997, 24.

<sup>2</sup>Morgan Edwards, *Materials Toward a History of the Baptist Denomination* (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1770), 97-98.

<sup>3</sup>John C. Wenger, *History of the Mennonites of the Franconia Conference* (Telford, PA: Franconia Mennonite Historical Society, 1937), 91-92.

<sup>4</sup>John H. Oberholtzer, "A Letter of John H. Oberholtzer to Friends in Germany, 1849," *ibid.*, 420.

<sup>5</sup>John L. Delp, "Facts relating to the early

History of the Mennonites," *Herald of Truth*, II (January 1865), 4-5.

<sup>6</sup>Quoted in John L. Ruth, *Maintaining the Right Fellowship: A narrative account of life in the oldest Mennonite community in North America* (Herald Press: Scottsdale, PA, 1984), n.p., from Tyson's mss. in the Library of the Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania, Harleysville, PA.

<sup>7</sup>J. K. Harley, *A History and Geography of Montgomery County, PA* (n.p.: author, 1882), 16-27.

<sup>8</sup>George Washington to John Parke Custis, September 28, 1777, quoted in Samuel Whitaker Pennypacker, "Pennypacker's Mills" (Part II), *Bulletin of the Historical Society of Montgomery County*, XXII (Spring 1981), 305.

<sup>9</sup>Abraham J. Fretz, "Preface," *A Brief History of John and Christian Fretz* (Elkhart, IN: Mennonite Publishing Co., 1890), p. 6.

<sup>10</sup>Ernst Muller, *Geschichte der bernischen Täufer. Nach den Urkunden dargestellt*. Frauenfeld: J. Huber, 1895.

<sup>11</sup>C. Henry Smith, *Mennonite Country Boy: The Early Years of C. Henry Smith* (Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1962), 217-218.

<sup>12</sup>Benjamin W. Weaver, Diary, October 7, 1910, Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, Lancaster, PA.

<sup>13</sup>Noah H. Mack, "Introduction," M. G. Weaver, *Mennonites of Lancaster Conference* (Scottsdale, PA: Mennonite Publishing House, 1931), xiii.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 338.

<sup>15</sup>John Hershey Mellinger (b. 1858), "An Autobiography" (facsimile of excerpt from a handwritten mss. at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society), *Missionary Messenger*, "Special Memorial Supplement" (September 1952), 8-9.

<sup>16</sup>Rhoda H. Campbell, "Introduction," *Out of the Silent Past* (Lancaster, PA: Feldser, 1950), n.p.

<sup>17</sup>T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding," II, 51, *Four Quartets* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 51.

<sup>18</sup>Lesslie Newbigin, *Proper Confidence: Faith, Doubt and Certainty in Christian Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 52.

<sup>19</sup>C. Arnold Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction* (Kitchener, Ont.: Pandora Press, 1995), 381.

<sup>20</sup>Czeslaw Milosz, "In Salem," *The Collected Poems 1931-1987* (Hopewell, NJ: The Ecco Press, 1988), 412.



# New Treasures in the Archives of the Mennonite Church

By Dennis Stoesz,  
Archivist

What follows is a sampling of personal papers and organizational records that have come into the archives during the last six months of 1997. They are listed alphabetically by the name of the collection.

**Hage, Friedrich, 1794-1863.** Papers, 1819-1891, 1975-1977, reflecting Hage's life in Germany and emigration to the United States in 1825-1826. Friedrich Hage was married to Feronica Esch in 1818. Hage served as an Amish-Mennonite minister in Germany and as an Amish bishop in Holmes County, Ohio. Documents include verification of tenancy at four estates in Bavaria, 1819-1826; letter regarding possible emigration to Brazil, 1825; passport for Hage, wife, two children, and a hired

hand, 1825-1826; receipt of passage from Hamburg to Philadelphia, June 29, 1826; and individual documents on Esch, Hage, and Bontrager families, 1858-1891, 1975-1977. The 1744 Froschauer Bible, which contains Hage and Esch family records, formed a part of this collection. It has been placed with the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College. The Bible was owned by Johannes Esch from 1786-1820 and was then purchased by Hage in 1820. Papers form one legal file. Donor: Sue Bontrager, Middlebury, Indiana.

**Hostetler, Lester, 1892-1989, and Charity (Steiner) Hostetler, 1895-1987.** Photographs, circa 1890s-1920s; and plain coat and vest, 1921.



*First meetinghouse of Walnut Creek Mennonite Church, built in 1862 south of Walnut Creek, Ohio. It was used up until 1896, when it was sold to Simon Horrisberger for \$44.50 and moved to town, where it was used as an implement shed. Photograph taken in 1918. Source: Lester and Charity (Steiner) Hostetler Photograph Collection.*

Photographs are of the Steiner and Eby families, of the time Lester and Charity were at Goshen College, 1906-1916, and of their time at Walnut Creek Mennonite Church,

*Lester and Charity (Steiner) Hostetler, with daughter Alice, 1921. They were married in 1918. Here he is seen wearing the plain coat, which he had someone make; he did not always wear it. This plain coat was recently donated to the Archives. Hostetler was ordained by his home congregation, Walnut Creek Mennonite Church, Ohio, in 1915, and served as pastor of that church from 1918-1924. Source: Lester and Charity (Steiner) Hostetler Photograph Collection.*

*Dress was a sensitive issue in the turbulent church times of the late 1910s and early 1920s, especially for the women of the church. At one point Lester Hostetler was interviewed by a church committee on several issues, including dress. It is interesting to read how Hostetler makes a distinction between the authority of the conference and that of the congregation on the issue of dress. Some of this reflects the differences in the polity of the Mennonites, who leaned more toward conference, and that of Amish-Mennonites, who leaned more toward the congregation.*

*The committee met at Canton Mission, May 13, 1920. They reported that regarding the dress question, Lester Hostetler "believes in simplicity of attire and teaches non-conformity, but is not in harmony in every detail with the conference resolution on this subject. He believes that individual congregations should be granted the privilege to decide for themselves on the style and nature of head-gear and other articles of dress, as well as the form of the devotion covering. He expressed his harmony with the use of the head covering as taught in I Corinthians 11."*





Walnut Creek, Ohio. Plain coat and vest, 1921, belonged to Lester Hostetler. He was ordained at Walnut Creek Mennonite Church in 1915 and served as pastor from 1918 to 1924. 2.5 linear feet. Donor: Alice Kreider, Goshen, Indiana.

**Illinois Mennonite Conference, 1872- , Tiskilwa, Illinois.** Records, 1954-1997, including the files of conference coordinator, Ivan Kauffmann, 1986-1990; the working files of the executive committee, 1954-1986; and cassette tape recordings of annual conferences, 1995-1997. The records reflect the various activities and projects of the conference, including missions in Chicago and the Quad cities, leadership and ordination in the conference, youth ministry, the conference minister, the treasurer, the congregations, and the work of the nurture, finance, evangelism, peace and service commissions. 7.5 linear feet. Donor: Marilyn Eigsti, Administrative Assistant.

**International Voluntary Service, 1953- , Washington, D.C.** Records, 1952-1994, including minutes, reports, program files, photographs, tape recordings and videos of this organization, which is funded by the United States Government and has roots in Brethren, Quaker, and Mennonite constituencies. Includes minutes and reports of the Executive and Board of Directors, 1952-1970, as collected by secretary William T. Snyder; program files (alumni files) of IVS's involvement in Ecuador and Bolivia, 1989-1994; and audiovisual materials of IVS's work in Vietnam, 1959-1972, and work in Algeria, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cambodia, Ecuador, Honduras, southern Africa, Sudan, Thailand, Yemen, and Zaire, 1971-1993. 10 linear feet. Donor: Anne Shirk, Program Development.

**Kime, Earl Lee, 1919- , Mishawaka, Indiana.** Family correspondence and papers, 1846-1892, from Carl W. Miller, 1818-1899, and

Christiana (Aschinger) Miller, 1825-1901. They were married in 1849 in Germany and were Lutheran in faith. In 1852, they emigrated with two small boys to the United States. Eventually they joined the Amish, who had befriended them in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Millers moved to Wayne County, Ohio, around 1856, and there joined Oak Grove Mennonite Church. In 1876, they moved to Elkhart County, Indiana, and they are buried in Clinton Frame Cemetery. The book, *Carl and Christiana Miller Family*, written by Lillian L. Miller and Esther Mabel Yoder, 1997, was part of this collection and is available at the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College. 6.5 linear inches. Donor: Earl L. Kime.

**Mennonite Camping Association, 1960- .** Records, 1975-1996, of this inter-Mennonite fellowship of camps, which reflect the work of the Board of Directors through this time period. The records include board minutes, *MCA Newsletter*, incorporation papers, statements on philosophy and objectives and on curriculum development, financial reports, and reports from biennial conventions. The association holds biennial meetings, with regional meetings held in alternate years. The presidents who have served two year terms, starting in 1976, are William Weaver, Terry Burkhalter, Orv Gingerich, Oswald Goering, Paul Beiler, J. Alton Horst, Leroy Mast, Dana Sommers, Robert M. Bender, Tim Lehman, and Mary Jane Eby. Earlier Eldina Miller Nussbaum had served as treasurer, 1951-1976, and Virgil Brenneman as executive secretary, 1968-1977. 2 linear feet. Donor: Mary Jane Eby, President, Siletz, Oregon, via Howard E. Krehbiel, Bluffton, Ohio.

**Mennonite Church, Hymnal Project, 1982-1992, Mary K. Oyer.** Records, 1982-1989, as collected and retained by Mary K. Oyer, including minutes, correspondence, a comparison of hymn tunes and texts from

the different traditions, a list of hymns considered for the *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (1992), and the preparation and publication of *Hymnal Sampler* (1989). Oyer was chair of this hymnal project from 1984-1986 and project manager, 1987-1989. She also was editor of the *Hymnal Sampler*, 1989. The *Hymnal* was published in 1992 as a joint project of the Church of the Brethren, General Conference Mennonite Church, and Mennonite Church, with contributions from Churches of God and Mennonite Brethren. 2.4 linear feet. Donor: Mary K. Oyer, Goshen, Indiana.

**Michiana Anabaptist Historians, 1992- .** Records, 1991-1997, including minutes, newsletters, reports, constitutions, membership lists, cassette tapes, and published articles of this historical group based in northern Indiana and southern Michigan (Michiana). Presidents have included Russell Krabill and John F. Murray. Donors: Al Albrecht, Secretary, and Dennis Stoesz, Member.



*Study from Menno Simons, Woodcut, 1961, by Warren Rohrer (1927-1995). Rohrer chose to deal with Menno Simons as the humble and simple man that he became, with particular emphasis given to the eyes. Source: Warren Rohrer Collection.*





Above: Arm patch worn by relief workers of Mennonite Central Committee. This one was worn by Joe S. or Myrtle Wyse, who served in Holland, and in Kiel, Germany, 1948-50. Source: Mennonite Central Committee Collection.

Below: Food from Mennonite Central Committee arriving in Kiel, Germany, February 1950. This photograph is on the cover of a packet containing thank-you letters to Mennonite Central Committee from the community of Kiel for the food and clothing they received. The packet was given to Joe S. and Myrtle Wyse who served in Kiel as relief workers. Source: Joe S. and Myrtle Wyse Photograph Collection.



Rohrer, Warren, 1927-1995, *Study from Menno Simons*, 1961. Woodcut of Menno Simons, 1961. Rohrer was commissioned by Eastern Mennonite University to make the woodcut to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the death of Simons. Rohrer indicated that his natural tendency in cutting the




Photo A: Interior of Yellow Creek meetinghouse, built 1861. Date of photograph unknown, probably before 1953. After the division of 1872, the Wisler Mennonites and the Funk Group (Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference) used this building on alternate Sundays. After 1912, when the Funk group built a brick church building (Yellow Creek Mennonite Church) across the road, the Wisler Mennonites continued using this frame building. It was remodeled in 1953. Source: Yellow Creek Mennonite Church Collection.

woodcut portrait was to respect the rough cuttings of the tools as they served to create an effect, somewhat expressionistic, which would have paralleled so well a degree of fanaticism revealed in Menno's early life. However, he ultimately chose to deal with Menno Simons as the humble and simple man that he became, with particular emphasis given to the eyes. Owen Gingerich, who was interested in art and who had served on the same cattle boat with Rohrer in 1946, bought the print for \$15 in 1961. Only 40 prints were made. One print, 61. x 45.6 cm, 3/20 Second Edition. Donor: Owen Gingerich, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

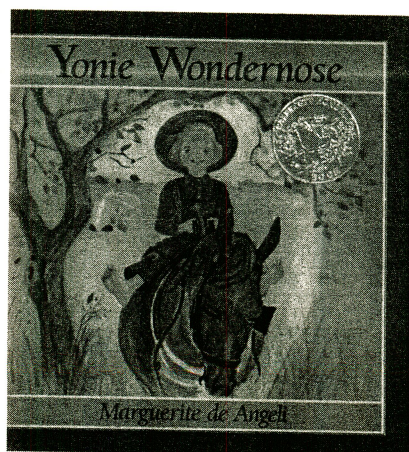
Wyse, Joe S. and Myrtle, Stryker, Ohio. Photographs and papers, 1948-1950, of Wyse's work in Holland and in Kiel, Germany, under the auspices of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Includes snapshots, memorabilia, postcards, and thank-you photograph albums and paintings made by the persons receiving relief. Collection also

includes ration stamps, 1945, and slides of trips made by the Wyse, ca. 1958-1962. The arm patch worn by MCC Relief Workers was part of this collection, and has been placed with the Mennonite Central Committee's museum collection here at the Archives. 7 linear inches. Donor: Children of Joe S. and Myrtle Wyse, via Vera Schmucker, Goshen, Indiana.

**Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, 1845- , Goshen, Indiana.** Photographs, circa 1900s, of interior and exterior of the 1861 meetinghouse. Photograph of exterior of the 1861 meetinghouse was taken before 1912, when the church relocated to a new brick building across the road. Date of interior photograph is unknown. The Wisler Mennonite group continues to use this church today. One file. Donor: Marvin Newcomer, Goshen, Indiana. 



## Book Review



*Yonie Wondernose* by Marguerite de Angeli. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1997. 48 Pages.

Price: \$10.99 U.S.; \$15.75 Canada.

by Kathryn Aschliman

*Yoni Wondernose*, the classic picture book about the curious Amish boy who achieved in spite of the odds against him, is again in print! Seven-year-old Yonie was left at home with his grandmother and little sister while his parents and older sister went on an overnight visit. After being warned by his parents not to be a wondernose and forget what he was doing, Yonie was placed in charge of caring for the barn animals. His problems were compounded when lightning struck the barn, and the animals had to be evacuated. "Children who come to know such characters in an intimate way are able to draw sustenance and inspiration from them over and over again" (Coody, p. 194). Is that why a middle-aged mother recalls checking out this book repeatedly when she went to the library as a young girl? (Berry).

This glimpse into the Pennsylvania Dutch life of Lancaster County was first published in 1944 with renewal in 1972. Recently Laura Draper, member of

the Publication Board of Herald Press, observed with regret that Marguerite de Angeli's high quality books like *Yonie Wondernose* were out of print. It was then learned that the publishing rights for *Yonie Wondernose* had been returned to Henry de Angeli, the author's second youngest son who lives in a retirement community in New Jersey. He had interest in reissuing the book and released the original printer's negatives that were in his possession (Schrock).

When the big, flat box containing the negatives arrived at Herald Press in Scottdale, Pennsylvania, a faithful reproduction of the Caldecott Honor book, so designated in 1944 on the basis of the quality of its illustrations, was made. Mary Alice Wheeler, Ph.D., a professor in the Childhood Education Department of Bloomsburg University, wrote, "It is a paperback of exceptional quality. It's a lovely edition" (Tylka, "Wondernoseful"). The richness of the red and blue hues deepens the four-color artwork. The embossed silver medalion supplied by Doubleday and applied to the cover is a tasteful reminder of the merits of this work. Missing, however, are the sketches of the Stoltzfus farmstead on the endpapers.

In the introduction to the new edition of *Yonie Wondernose*, Harry de Angeli suggests that this book contains "gentle lessons for young readers, and still entertains while demonstrating the importance of family relationships." These ingredients for quality in picture books are as apropos today as they were a half century ago.

Among the "gentle lessons" may be the satisfaction of completing an arduous task in spite of distractions and temptations to pursue immediate gratification, an obvious struggle today as is the need for reconciliation. While Yonie's parents were gone, he was to feed and water the barn creatures—the horses first and by all means Dunder, the red bull. However, Dunder was the last ani-

mal Yonie rescued from the blazing barn after a burning timber fell on the bull's back. Plagued with guilt for having released the pigs first and even pausing to look at the red fire engine, he experienced forgiveness from his father and reconciliation after confessing what he perceived to be a wrong-doing. These "gentle lessons" require a lifetime of application.

The entertainment aspect present in the universal yearning to learn driven by curiosity is as evident in the illustrations as in the story line. Peering into a squirrel's hole on Yonie's way to get the cows, inadvertently locking Granny in the chicken house while being distracted by what he suspected might be an airplane, are detailed with charming black and white drawings. Samuel L. Yoder, lecturer on the Amish who grew up in an Amish home, sees the haircut around a bowl to be a joke or a myth. He said that would be impossible to do, but the artist makes it look entirely possible.

The importance of family relationships was evident; Granny halted her scolding when she saw how sorry Yonie looked for locking her in the chicken house. The trust his parents had in his ability to be the "man of the house" in their absence is highlighted by the secret promise between Pop and Yonie. Although there was teasing, respect between family members was evident.

Yoder commends the book for its homespun quality, putting romance in the farm, but he cautions against the lack of realistic safety-mindedness. Entrusting a seven-year-old to care for a bull and rewarding him with the responsibility of handling a team of great work horses, and having him rescue animals from a burning barn when the beams are falling on the animals supply excitement and challenge to the storyline. "It makes a nice story," he concluded. Nine-, seven-, and four-year-old present-day boys were particularly intrigued with the bull and the barn fire (Stiffney).



The seed for this story was planted when Margaret Lesser, editor of Doubleday's children's book department, asked if de Angeli knew anything about the Pennsylvania Dutch. Indeed she did. She had heard stories of the interesting expressions, good food, and traditional customs when her father told of his travels in Pennsylvania as a representative of Eastman Kodak. But this subject required more research. She started at the library. She learned that most of the early settlers in Pennsylvania came to America for religious freedom. She read about followers of Menno Simons and others. She decided to portray the Amish "because only Amish dress the children in old-fashion, plain-colored clothes" (de Angeli, p. 127).

De Angeli had a conviction that she should spend time with Amish people to learn their attitudes toward people and their work habits. So one mid-October day, she went to Lancaster County where she stayed in the home of Dr. Zuk. The first day he took her to the little red schoolhouse where most of the students were Amish. She noted there were four Yonies in the group of 26 children. She made quick sketches of the children as they recited their lessons and wrote a list of the colors of the dresses and shirts.

In the afternoon de Angeli accompanied Dr. Zuk on his rounds which gave her entrance to Amish homes. The next day while she waited outside one of them at the doctor's suggestion, she sketched the buildings of a farm lying down below a field. It seemed the "epitome of Pennsylvania farmland—the stone barn, the solid well-built house and outbuildings, the turning weather vane," she recalled. "I used my colored pencils to catch the brilliant foliage, the amber stubble in the field, and finished it before the doctor returned" (de Angeli, p. 133). When Dr. Zuk saw de Angeli's sketches, he informed her Henry Stoltzfus lived there. He pointed out

the part of the house where the grandmother lived. The barn was over 200 years old.

About two weeks after de Angeli returned home to Jenkintown, she had a letter from Mrs. Zuk telling her that lightning struck the barn on the very day she sketched it and burned it to the ground. De Angeli returned to see the ruins. She found "all the men of the community were there helping to clear away the debris from the fire and the women

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*We have much  
to learn from  
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inclusion and  
diversity are high  
priority*

---

folk were cooking and making a kind of frolic out of it" (de Angeli, p. 134).

De Angeli showed Mrs. Stoltzfus the drawing she made of the barn; she was impressed. The women who gathered near the well were also surprised to recognize the sketch of a little boy pulling his red wagon loaded with wood for the kitchen fire as their own Yonie. After that, although still reluctant, Mrs. Stoltzfus granted permission for de Angeli to see the inside of her house. It was immaculate. Mrs. Stoltzfus showed a hooked rug her daughter was making. "Teach a child to vork when he is little and when he grows up, he like to vork," Mrs. Stoltzfus explained.

Other interviews with people who lived in Lancaster County and had contacts with Amish people followed. There was additional research at City Hall and the office of the Register of Wills. According to her son Harry, Mrs. de Angeli lived with two families in Lancaster

County for a few days on several occasions.

De Angeli's ongoing research of the Amish, Mennonite, and Quaker cultures culminated in four books portraying the lives of peace-loving groups who settled in Pennsylvania: Amish—*Henner's Lydia*, 1936; Mennonite—*Skippack School*, 1939; Quaker—*Thee, Hannah!* 1940; and Amish—*Yonie Wondernose*, 1944, a sequel to *Henner's Lydia* using the same family of characters and set one year later. De Angeli wrote books about other minority groups: Swedish, Polish, French Canadian, black American, physically disabled, and Scottish.


When the story of Yonie and the burning barn "insisted on being written," de Angeli's grandson was about six months old. His father, Alfred, of Pennsylvania Dutch extraction, recognized his son's natural curiosity and called him "Wunnernass." Hence, Yonie, being of a universally curious nature, was dubbed *Wondernose* by his author and illustrator. De Angeli wrote, "I enjoyed every bit of *Yonie Wondernose*" (de Angeli, p. 143).

In 1944 it was chosen as a Caldecott Honor Book in the New York Herald Tribune Spring Book Festival. In 1973, de Angeli indicated she still received "echoes of her earliest books, especially *Henner's Lydia* and *Yonie Wondernose*" (Hopkins, p. 119).

We have much to learn from de Angeli during these days when inclusion and diversity are high priority. In *Twentieth Century Children's Writers*, Joan McGrath declares, "De Angeli has a gift for making the exotic, peculiar, or particular seem universal and unthreatening to young readers, who are often xenophobic in their rejection of the unfamiliar. She writes with equal sympathy and understanding of families of varied ethnic backgrounds and creeds; and just as her illustrations bring their outward appearances vividly to life, her gentle, simple stories make their daily lives and the small concerns of their chil-



dren those of all loving families everywhere. If at first glance her works seem concerned with contrasting cultures, in fact her study is that of the universality of happy childhood" (Kirkpatrick, p. 231). And isn't that a desire we have for all children?

Marguerite de Angeli lived until 1987. "Children across the land cannot cuddle up in her lap as her own grandchildren and greats can, but cuddling up with her stories *Yonie Wondernose* and *Skippack School* is certainly within the realm of possibility. They can catch her warmth, vitality and sensitivity—and we can, too!" (Hopkins, p. 119). How soon will *Henner's Lydia* and *Thee, Hannah!* be available again? 

*Kathryn Aschliman, Goshen, Indiana, has taught early childhood education at Goshen College and directed the Laboratory Kindergarten program. She is now enjoying retirement.*

Editor's note: *Henner's Lydia* is scheduled to be released by Herald Press in May.

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# Directory of Mennonite and Related Church Historians and Committees

**Allegheny Conference Historical Committee**, Mark Moyer, 601 Pittsburgh St., Scottdale, PA 15683, 724 887-4784

**Archives of the Mennonite Church**, John E. Sharp, 1700 South Main St., Goshen, IN 46526, 219 535-7477, Fax: 219 535-7293, E-mail: johnes@Goshen.edu. Web Site: www.goshen.edu/mcarchives

**Atlantic Coast Conference Historian**, Margaret Derstine, 133 W. Main St., Apt. 4, Strasburg, PA 17579, 717 687-8259

**Brethren in Christ Historical Society**, E. Morris Sider, Archives of Brethren in Christ Church, Messiah College, Grantham, PA 17027, 717 691-6048, Fax: 717 691-6042

**California Mennonite Historical Society**, Rod Janzen, 4824 East Butler, Fresno CA 93727, 209 453-2225, E-mail: kennsrem@fresno.edu

**Casselman River Area Amish and Mennonite Historians**, Kenneth L. Yoder, PO Box 591, Grantsville, MD 21536, 301 895-5687

**Central District Conference Historical Committee**, William Keeney, 140 North Lawn Ave., Bluffton, OH 45817, 419 358-6017

**Conference of Mennonites in Alberta**, Henry D. Goerzen, Rt. 1, Didsbury, AB T0M 0W0, 403 335-8414

**Conference of Mennonites in Canada History and Archives Committee**, Ken Reddig, Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftsbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4, 204 888-6781

**Conservative Mennonite Conference Historical Committee**, Elmer S. Yoder, 3511 Edison Street, Hartsville OH 44632, 330 877-9566

**Delaware Mennonite Historical Association**, John J. Yoder, PO Box 238, Greenwood, DE 19950

**Essex-Kent Mennonite Historical Association**, 31 Pickwick Drive, Leamington. Mailing address: Harold Thiessen, Rt. 4, Leamington, ON N8H 3V7

**Franklin Mennonite Conference Historical Committee**, Merle Cordell, 8979 Grindstone Hill Rd., Chambersburg, PA 17201, 717 597-7415

**General Conference Mennonite Church**, John Thiesen, Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, KS 67117, 316 283-2500, E-mail: jthiesen@bethelks.edu

**Germantown Mennonite Historic Trust**, Galen Horst-Martz, 6133 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19144, 215 843-0943, Fax: 215 843-6263

**Hanover-Steinbach Historical Society**, Delbert Plett, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0, 204 326-6454

**Hans Herr House Museum**, Douglas J. Nyce, 1849 Hans Herr Dr., Willow Street, PA 17584, 717 464-4438

**Heritage Historical Library**, David Luthy, Route 4, Aylmer, ON N5H 2R3

**Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church**, John E. Sharp, 1700 South Main St., Goshen, IN 46526, 219 535-7477, Fax: 219 535-7293, E-mail: johnes@Goshen.edu. Web Site:



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**Howard-Miami Counties Heritage and Genealogical Society**, Elaine Sommers Rich, 112 South Spring Street, Bluffton, OH 45817, 419 358-1515  
**Illinois Amish Interpretive Center**, Wilmer Otto, PO Box 244, Arcola, IL 61910, 217 268-3599  
**Illinois Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society and Illinois Conference Historian**, Edwin J. Stalter, Mennonite Heritage Center, PO Box 1007, Metamora, IL 61548, 309 367-2551 or 815 796-2918  
**Indiana-Michigan Conference Historian**, Daniel E. Hochstetler, 1008 College Avenue, Goshen, IN 46526, 219 533-7819, E-mail: 104370.3337@compuserve.com  
**Iowa-Nebraska Mennonite Conference Historian**, Barbara Troyer, 1001 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Wellman, IA 52356, 319 646-2151  
**Juniata Mennonite Historical Society**, Noah L. Zimmerman, The Historical Center, HCR 63, Richfield, PA 17086, 717 694-3543  
**Kidron Community Historical Society**, Bruce Detweiler Breckbill director, Kidron-Sonnenberg Heritage Center, 13153 Emerson Rd., Box 234, Kidron, OH 44636, 330 857-0111  
**Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society**, Carolyn Charles Wenger, 2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster, PA 17602, 717 393-9745  
**Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society**, Ken Reddig, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4, 204 888-6781 Web Site: www.mmhs.org  
**Meetingplace, The**, Curtis Brubaker, 33 King St., St. Jacobs, ON N0B 2N0, 519 664-3518  
**Menno-Hof**, Tim Lichti, PO Box 701, Shipshewana, IN 46565, 219 768-4117  
**Menno Simons Library and Archives**, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, 540 432-4000, E-mail: lehmanjo@lib.emu.edu  
**Mennonite Archival Centre**, Hugo Friesen, Columbia Bible College, 32025 Dahlstrom Ave, Ste B, Abbotsford, BC V2T 2Z8, 604 853-6177, Fax 604 853-3063

**Mennonite Archives of Ontario**, Samuel Steiner, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6, 519 885-0220 ext. 238, E-mail: steiner@watservl.uwaterloo.ca  
**Mennonite Brethren Churches (Canada) Historical Committee**, Abe Dueck, Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5, 204 669-6575  
**Mennonite Brethren Conference (North American) Historical Commission**, Paul Toews, Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 4824 East Butler, Fresno, CA 93727, 209 453-2225  
**Mennonite Brethren Church (USA)**, Peggy Goertzen, Center for MB Studies, Tabor College, Hillsboro, KS 67063, 316 947-3121  
**Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada**, Vera Martin, Rt. 2, West Montrose, ON N0B 2V0, 519 669-5379  
**Mennonite Church Historical Association**, See Archives of the Mennonite Church.  
**Mennonite Heritage Center**, Roy Showalter, 4850 Molly Pitcher Highway S., Chambersburg, PA 17201-9233, 717 375-4544  
**Mennonite Heritage Centre**, Ken Reddig, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4, 204 888-6781, Web Site: www.mbnet.mb.ca/~mhc/  
**Mennonite Heritage Village**, PO Box 1136, Steinbach, MB ROA 2A0, 204 326-9661  
**Mennonite Historical Association of the Cumberland Valley**, 4850 Molly Pitcher Highway South, Chambersburg, PA 17201, 717 375-4544 (library) or 301 733-2184 (Roy Showalter residence)  
**Mennonite Historical Library**, Ann Hilty, Bluffton College, Bluffton, OH 45817, 419 358-3365  
**Mennonite Historical Library**, John D. Roth, Goshen College, 1700 South Main, Goshen, IN 46526, 219 535-7418, E-mail: johndr@Goshen.edu  
**Mennonite Historical Society**, Walter Sawatsky, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, 3003 Benham Avenue, Elkhart, IN 46517, 219 295-3726, E-mail: 72610.3063@compuserve.com

**Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta**, Henry D. Goerzen, RR 1, Didsbury, AB T0M 0W0, 403 335-8414  
**Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia**, Bill Riediger, Mennonite Archives, 2940 Clearbrook Rd., Clearbrook, BC V2T 2Z8, 604 833-3358  
**Mennonite Historical Society of Canada**, Ron Loewen, Box 21441, Steinbach, MB R0A 2T3, 304 326-2715, Web Site: www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/MHSC/mhsc.html  
**Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania**, Joel Alderfer, The MeetingHouse, 565 Yoder Road, PO Box 82, Harleysville, PA 19438, 215 256-3020, Web Site: www.pond.com/~mennhist  
**Mennonite Historical Society of Iowa**, Lois Swartzentruber Gugel, 710 12<sup>th</sup> St., Kalona, IA 52247, 319 656-3732  
**Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario**, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6, 519 885-0220, E-mail: mhso@watservl.uwaterloo.ca  
**Mennonite Information Center**, Dr. Bruce Friesen, 5798 CR 77, Box 324, Berlin, OH 44610, 330 893-3192  
**Mennonite Library and Archives**, John D. Thiesen, Bethel College, North Newton, KS 67117, 316 283-2500 ext. 304, E-mail: jthiesen@menno.bethelks.edu  
**Michiana Anabaptist Historians**, John Bender, 206 Marine Ave, Elkhart, IN 46516, 219 293-2453  
**Mifflin County Mennonite Historical Society**, Paul Bender, PO Box 5603, Belleville, PA 17004, 717 935-2598 or 717 935-5574  
**Millbank Information Centre**, Glenn Zehr, PO Box 35, Millbank, ON N0K 1L0, 519 595-8037  
**Missionary Church Archives and Historical Collection**, Tim Erdel, Bethel College, 1001 W. McKinley Ave., Mishawaka, IN 46545, 219 259-8511  
**Muddy Creek Farm Library**, Amos B. Hoover, 376 N. Muddy Creek Road, Denver, PA 17517  
**Nebraska Mennonite Historical Society**, Eldon Hostetler, 1014 First Street, Apt. 6, Milford, NE 68405, 402 761-3072



**North Central Mennonite**

**Conference Historian**, Fred Kanagy, 753 Road 523, Bloomfield, MT 59315, 406 583-7782

**Northern District Conference**,

Rachel Senner, Freeman Academy, 748 South Main, Freeman, SD 57209, 605 925-4237

**Northwest Conference Historian**,

Harry Stauffer, Route 1, Tofield, AB T0B 4J0, 403 662-2144

**Ohio Amish Library**, Paul Kline,

4292 Star Route 39, Millersburg, OH 44654, 330 893-2883

**Ohio Conference Historical**

**Committee**, Kenneth Nisly, 3781 Cranwood Street NW, N. Canton, OH 44720, 330 494-0120

**Oregon Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society**, Margaret

Shetler, 5326 Briar Knob Loop NE, Scotts Mills, OR 97375, 503 873-6406

**Pacific Northwest Conference**,

Margaret Shetler, 5326 Briar Knob Loop NE, Scotts Mills, OR 97375, 503 873-6406

**The People's Place**, Merle and

Phyllis Pellman Good, Main Street, Intercourse, PA 17534, 717 768-7171

**Pequea Bruderschaft Library**, on

Old Leacock Road, one forth mile

south of Gordonville. Mailing address: 176 North Hollander Road, Gordonville, PA 17529

**Saskatchewan Mennonite**

**Historical Society**, Leonard Duell, Box 364, Aberdeen, SK S0K 0A0

**Shenadoah Valley Mennonite**

**Historians**, Steve Shenk, Communications Dept., Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, 540 432-4208, E-mail: shenks@emu.edu

**Stark County Mennonite and**

**Amish Historical Society**, Elmer S. Yoder, 3511 Edison Street NE, Hartville, OH 44632, 330 877-9566

**Southeast Mennonite Conference**,

Martin W. Lehman, conference historian, 765 Dean Avenue, Sarasota, FL 34237, 813 366-3381

**South Central Conference**

**Historian**, Bernice L. Hostetler, Rt. 2, PO Box 77, Harper, KS 67058, 316 896-2040

**Swiss Community Historical**

**Society**, Keith Sommer, PO Box 5, Bluffton, OH 45817

**Swiss Heritage Society**, Claren

Neuenschwander, 805 W. Van Buren, Berne, IN 46711, 219 587-2784

**Virginia Conference Historical**

**Committee**, James O. Lehman,

Menno Simons Library and Archives, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, 540 432-4169, E-mail: lehmanjo@emu.edu

**Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups**, Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, PA 17022, 717 367-1151

**Western District Conference**

**Historical Committee**, Hilda Schmidt, PO Box 306, North Newton, KS 67117, 316 283-6300

This directory lists North American Mennonite, Amish and related historical committees, societies, conference historians, and interpretation centers. *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* publishes this list annually and would appreciate any updates or corrections from our readers.



**Mennonite Historical Bulletin**

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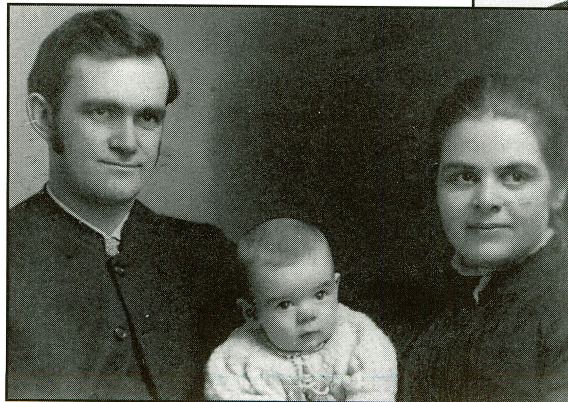
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No. 2

## A Century of Mission:

### Mennonite Church Programs in Context, 1897-1997



*Visionaries and kingdom builders: Top right: James Lark (with Rowena), the first African-American minister in the Mennonite Church. Center: Daniel Kauffman, first moderator of the Mennonite Church and first editor of the Gospel Herald. Bottom left: Dr. William and Alice (Thut) Page (with son William), first missionaries to India.*

At this, what may be the final General Assembly before integration, it is appropriate for us to look back and to look ahead. To give you a sense of the church's mission of healing and hope within the context of the world in which we live, let us revisit the past 100 years. John Sharp, director of the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church, will share with you his reading of the century. As he proceeds, the others on the platform will help to tell the story, specifically of when, where, and how the Mennonite Church and its program boards interfaced with social history.

This time line was presented at Orlando 97, the Mennonite Church General Assembly, July 30, 1997, as the Joint Board report. It was prepared by John E. Sharp and J. Daniel Hess, with assistance from Dennis Stoesz and the Mennonite Church Program Boards.

Mim Book, Associate General Secretary of the General Board, was moderator, John E. Sharp was the "professor historian," program board representatives inserted their contributions.



## A Century of Ministry: Mennonite Church Programs in Context, 1897-1997

### 1897

- William McKinley inaugurated as U.S. President
- Severe famine in India
- George Lambert publicizes Indian famine

### 1898

- Noah Byers becomes principal of Elkhart Institute
- First Mennonite General Conference session
- U.S. declares war on Spain over Cuba

- Pierre and Marie Curie discover radium and polonium

### 1899

- First missionaries sail to India
- Philippines demand independence from U.S.
- First magnetic recording of sound

### 1900

- First women's sewing circle
- First young people's literary societies

- William McKinley, 25th President of the U.S., reelected
- Sigmund Freud: *The Interpretation of Dreams*

### 1901

- First Old People's Home, Rittman, Ohio
- U.S. President William McKinley assassinated
- Ragtime jazz develops in U.S.
- J. P. Morgan organizes U.S. Steel Corporation

## 1897, 1898, 1899

A century ago William McKinley was inaugurated as president of the United States and Wilfred Laurier was prime minister of Canada. In Mennonite circles, George Lambert was becoming a household name as he stirred the church to respond to a crisis far beyond North American borders—a severe famine in India.

The church rallied, not only by sending food and money to starving India, it also sent out its first missionaries to India — J.A. Ressler, W.B. and Alice Page.

Here is a statement, written by J. D. Graber, about the Mennonite Church's first overseas mission:

"Primarily and fundamentally, India needs the Gospel of Christ. She needs this Gospel because we believe that any soul anywhere without a living faith in Christ is lost. I should like to make my appeal for India not on the basis of her sinful practices or of her revolting heathenism. I shall not attempt to enlist your sympathies for India by telling you terrible stories of child marriage, of accursed widowhood, or of some of her customs that seem revolting to us. I shall not attempt to draw the usual map of the world of India, China, Africa and other Oriental countries painted in black and the rest of the world in white ... I contend that this attitude and these tactics are not right, and I earnestly hope I shall never be guilty of producing in anyone's mind this feeling of complacent race superiority."

## 1900, 1901, 1902

While Sigmund Freud was publishing his psychoanalytic theories, Mennonite women rolled up their sleeves and activated needles and thread to support mission work, both at home and abroad. Following the lead of their organizing elders, young people gathered in literary societies for fellowship and activities, while the first old people's home was also established.

The world was shocked by the assassination of President McKinley. Big business was forging a new era, as J. P. Morgan organized the giant U.S. Steel Corporation. But beyond the sounds of forging steel a new sound developed: ragtime jazz. This new music, sometimes lively and sometimes melancholy, expressed the soul of African-Americans.

The *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* is published quarterly by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church and distributed to the members of the Mennonite Church Historical Association.

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Microfilms of Volumes I-L of the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* are available from: University Microfilms, Inc., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.



## 1902

- *Church and Sunday School Hymnal* published
- U.S. acquires perpetual control over Panama Canal
- Beatrix Potter: *Peter Rabbit*, children's stories

## 1903

- Elkhart Institute becomes Goshen College
- Alaskan frontier is settled
- Orville and Wilbur Wright fly a powered airplane
- First teddy bears designed; named for Theodore Roosevelt

## 1904

- Theodore Roosevelt wins U.S. Presidential election
- Work begins on the Panama Canal
- Helen Keller graduates from

Radcliffe College

## 1905

- Mennonite Board of Education formed
- Albert Einstein formulates Special Theory of Relativity
- Ty Cobb begins baseball career with the Detroit Tigers

## 1906

- Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities formed
- Albert Schweitzer: *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*
- French Grand Prix motorcar race first run
- San Francisco earthquake kills 700

## 1907

- Oklahoma becomes 46th state of the U.S.

- Mother's Day established
- First daily comic strip, *Mr. Mutt* later, *Mutt and Jeff*

## 1908

- Mennonite Publishing House established
- *Gospel Herald*, *Words of Cheer*, *Story Friends* begin
- Union of South Africa established
- The Ford Motor Company produces the first Model T

## 1909

- Hesston Academy and Bible School established
- *Christian Monitor* published
- U.S. explorer Robert E. Peary reaches the North Pole
- Beginning of Plastic Age

Beatrix Potter introduced English-speaking children to the antics of Peter Rabbit, who suffered the consequences of his disobedience at the hands of farmer Brown. Not taken in by frivolous tales of talking rabbits, Mennonites sang their way through a new English-language hymnbook, *The Church and Sunday School Hymnal* (1902).

## 1903, 1904, 1905

Soft and cuddly Teddy bears made their appearance in 1903, named after the "rough and ready" cowboy and presidential candidate, Teddy Roosevelt. We'll never know whether the Wright brothers took a Teddy bear on their first powered airplane ride, or how many pioneers who settled the Alaskan frontier wished for the companionship of Teddy bears in the face of Alaskan Grizzlies.

Helen Keller, the incorrigible blind and deaf child, was transformed by her miracle-working teacher, Anne Sullivan. This child conquered incredible odds to graduate from Radcliffe College in 1904. Helen Keller became the hero and model for hearing- and seeing-impaired people the world over.

Mennonite educational leaders probably paid little attention to the mathematical genius Albert Einstein in 1905. They were more concerned with the implications of higher education on the Mennonite Church than with the Special Theory of Relativity. Nor did they pay attention to a young man named Ty Cobb, who was beginning his baseball career with the Detroit Tigers.

## 1906, 1907, 1908

Albert Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, which would create a stir among theologians, had little effect on Mennonite mission leaders who organized the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities in 1906. They were surely moved by the 700 people who died in the devastating earthquake that hit San Francisco.

Oklahoma became the forty-sixth state of the union. Some Mennonites had been among the eager settlers who rushed across the line into the Cherokee strip when the government opened the land for white settlement. How many were aware of the Native Americans, who had once again been displaced?

In 1908 Henry Ford produced the first Model T Ford. Known by many as the Tin Lizzy, she could be purchased for \$850. This marvel of mechanical technology revolutionized North American society. The founders of the Mennonite Publishing House could hardly imagine that soon the periodicals and books they would produce would be carried all over North America in 18-wheeled descendants of the Tin Lizzy.

## 1909, 1910, 1911

The first commercial manufacture of Bakelite marked the beginning of the Plastic Age. Can you imagine life without it? No Tupperware, no plastic bags, no light-weight glasses frames, no plastic ware for the new students at Hesston Academy and Bible School?



## 1910

- The “week-end” becomes popular in the U.S.
- Father’s Day first celebrated in Spokane, Wash.

## 1911

- Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* stolen
- Nobel Prize for Chemistry: Marie Curie

## 1912

- Arizona and New Mexico become states of the U.S.
- S.S. *Titanic* sinks with missionary Annie Funk aboard

## 1913

- Federal income tax introduced in the U.S.
- Mahatma Gandhi arrested

## 1914

- World War I begins
- Panama Canal opened

## 1915

- Fundamentalism emerges in the Mennonite Church
- Efforts to establish Conscientious Objector position
- Henry Ford develops a farm tractor
- First transcontinental telephone call
- Margaret Sanger jailed for book on birth control

## 1916

- *Life Songs #1* published
- Woodrow Wilson reelected President of U.S.
- Carl Sandburg: *Chicago Poems*

## 1917

- Eastern Mennonite School opens
- Mission field opens in Argentina
- Canada passes the Military Service Act
- Bobbed hair as ladies’ hair fashion

## 1918

- Ex-Czar Nicholas II and family executed
- Daylight saving time introduced in America

Of course we’ve always had it, but the weekend took on new meaning in 1910. Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday became a block of time for leisure, for travel, for anything but work! And of course, we had fathers, but we didn’t celebrate before the residents of Spokane, Washington, started the trend, which became a national holiday in the U.S.

The burgeoning of popular culture coincided with (and possibly caused?) struggles in the typical Mennonite congregation. The issue wasn’t whether church members could go to peep shows—that was a clear no. Rather, the church was disquieted by the controversies among traditionalists, Fundamentalists, progressives, and modernists. A lot of effort by church leaders went into the clarification and advocacy of correct doctrine throughout the second and third decades of the century.

In 1911 China found itself in a revolution. The Manchu dynasty, in power since 1644, was overthrown. The new republic abolished pigtailed, reformed its calendar, and elected a president. Chiang Kai-shek was appointed the president’s military adviser.

## 1912, 1913, 1914

The modern world was shocked by a great tragedy on April 15, 1912. The unsinkable *Titanic* on its maiden voyage sank off the coast of Newfoundland. Captain Smith had said his career had been uneventful. This was to be—and was—his last voyage. Of special interest for Mennonites was the death of missionary Annie C. Funk, a second class passenger. She had been called home from India to Bally, Pa., to see her mother one last time.

Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian Passive Resistance Movement, was arrested. The world would hear much more about this hero of nonviolent resistance. Under Gandhi’s leadership, India gained its political independence from Great Britain.

It is unlikely that Gandhi was a household name among Mennonites in the early teens. When the war in Europe came close to home, even in the form of persecution, Mennonites thought about their own forms of witness for peace.

June 28, 1914, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, and his wife were assassinated in Sarajevo. This triggered an Austro-Hungarian declaration of war against Serbia. Great Britain declared war on Germany. Canada, a part of the British Empire found itself automatically at war. The domino effect had begun which led to a war never before experienced on earth—World War I. It was to be the “war to end all wars.”

## 1915, 1916, 1917

In New York, Margaret Sanger was jailed for writing *Family Limitation*, the first book on birth control. After her release she helped open the first birth control clinic. North American sensibilities had little tolerance for such intervention of God’s natural processes. Rural Mennonites had their eyes on Henry Ford’s newest invention: the farm tractor.

In 1916, Woodrow Wilson, the professor from Princeton University, was reelected president of the United States, barely defeating Charles Evans Hughes. Rather than singing popular political tunes, Mennonites began singing new gospel songs from the new collection published by MPH, *Life Songs #1*.



- World-wide influenza epidemic strikes

## 1919

- Prohibition amendment ratified
- Canada's first general strike in Winnipeg
- Jack Dempsey, U.S. heavyweight boxer, takes the world championship from Jess Willard

## 1920

- *Youth's Christian Companion* first published
- In Paris the League of Nations comes into being
- 19th Amendment gives American women right to vote

## 1921

- Takashi Hara, Premier of Japan, assassinated
- Mackenzie King elected Prime Minister of Canada
- Radio station KDKA in Pittsburgh transmits the first regular radio programs in the U.S.

## 1922

- Gandhi sentenced to six years imprisonment
- Mussolini forms Fascist government
- Louis Armstrong joins Joe "King" Oliver's band

## 1923

- Goshen College closes

- Foster Hewitt's *Hockey Night in Canada* first broadcast
- Centers of Tokyo and Yokohama destroyed by earthquake

## 1924

- S. C. Yoder becomes president of "new" Goshen College
- Calvin Coolidge wins U. S. presidential election
- *All Blacks*, New Zealand rugby football team, make undefeated tour of Britain

## 1925

- Sunday School *Junior Quarterly* published

What some feared, and what others demanded, came to pass in 1917: The U.S. declared war on Germany, and then on Hungary and Austria. Canada passed the Military Service Act to reinforce its volunteer fighting force. The war and the new rage, bobbed hair for women, notwithstanding, Mennonites sent missionaries to South America and opened a new school in Park View (Harrisonburg), Virginia.

## 1918, 1919, 1920

Finally, the "great" war which was to make "the world safe for democracy" ended. Woodrow Wilson proposed Fourteen Points for world peace. Russian Ex-Czar Nicholas II and his family were executed. The Serbo-Croatian-Slovene Kingdom of Yugoslavia emerged. The global influenza epidemic claimed thousands of lives.

The emergency needs of starving Mennonites in the Ukraine precipitated the organizing of Mennonite Central Committee, founded in 1920, with the participation of many from our denomination. Among them was Clayton Kratz of the Franconia Mennonite Conference who was arrested in Russia and never heard from again. That same year, Herald Press published *Feeding the Hungry* by P. C. Hiebert.

Workers in Winnipeg initiated Canada's first and only general strike (May 15, 1919). Laborers reacted against industrial abuses, high prices, low wages, long hours. For six weeks all essential services were shut down. This explosive event was a harbinger of the growing role of the labour movement in Canadian politics.

The optimistic "Roaring Twenties" arrived on the American scene as the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote, Warren G. Harding was elected 29th President, and Babe Ruth was sold by the Boston Red Sox to the NY Yankees for \$125,000. Scottdale's new *Youth's Christian Companion* did not comment on these events.

## 1921, 1922, 1923

Mackenzie King, the popular, highly-skilled leader of the Liberal Party, was elected Prime Minister of Canada (1921). Meanwhile in Pittsburgh, Pa., KDKA began transmitting the first regular radio program in the U.S. The Mennonite General Conference, in session at Garden City, Mo., incorporated Fundamentalist language and concepts into its new Confession of Faith.

The Ku Klux Klan, assuming the name of the post-Civil War organization, gained political power and boldness. In 1922, Klan activities became violent throughout the southern United States, destroying property and branding and whipping African-Americans and those who sympathized with them. At the same time, Louis Armstrong arrived in Chicago to join Joe "King" Oliver's band, and soon made his mark as a legendary jazz musician.

Disaster struck Japan when the centers of Tokyo and Yokohama were destroyed by an earthquake, leaving 120,000 dead. Instability of another kind caused the closing of Goshen College. The controversies of the teens and early 20s sometimes dealt with large theological issues, but it was often expressed in painful disagreements.

In 1922 Noah Oyer, dean of Hesston College, began writing the first vacation Bible school curriculum, which would eventually be published in 1928.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United Church of Canada founded</li> <li>• John T. Scopes trial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airplanes first used to dust crops (in Canada)</li> <li>• Babe Ruth hits 60 home runs for the Yankees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kingdom changed to Yugoslavia</li> <li>• U.S. Stock Exchange collapsed on Oct. 28</li> </ul>
<b>1926</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fascist German youth <i>Hitlerjugend</i> founded</li> <li>• Kodak produces the first 16mm movie film</li> </ul>	<b>1928</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenwood (Delaware) Mennonite School opened</li> <li>• First Disney Mickey Mouse films</li> <li>• Amelia Earhart is first woman to fly across Atlantic</li> </ul>	<b>1930</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Young People's Meetings &amp; Sunday eve. services</li> <li>• Haile Selassie crowned emperor of Ethiopia</li> <li>• Grant Wood: <i>American Gothic</i></li> </ul>
<b>1927</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Church Hymnal</i> published</li> <li>• Charles A. Lindbergh flies non-stop New York to Paris</li> </ul>	<b>1929</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name of Serbo-Croat-Slovene</li> </ul>	<b>1931</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robert Frost: <i>Collected Poems</i>, Pulitzer Prize</li> </ul>

## 1924, 1925, 1926

The following year (1924) Sanford Calvin Yoder, the new president of Goshen College, was charged with the task of rebuilding a faculty that would reflect the values and standards of the church. That same year another Calvin (Coolidge) became president of the U.S. when Warren Harding died in office.

In 1925 public opinions raged in a small courtroom in Tennessee. John T. Scopes, a high school teacher, became the focal point of a campaign to test a controversial law banning evolution theory in Tennessee's public schools. The case, known as the "monkey trial," pitted Protestant fundamentalism against the encroachment of scientific method in one of the most publicized cases of the era.

Ironically, about the same time that *Hitlerjugend* was founded (1926), the Mennonite World Conference held its first meeting in Basel and Zurich, Switzerland (1925).

## 1927, 1928, 1929

The world focused its attention upward these years: Charles A. Lindbergh flew nonstop from New York to Paris. Amelia Earhart was the first woman to fly across the Atlantic. And Canada was the first to use airplanes to dust crops. Airplanes weren't the only objects in the air: Babe Ruth kept baseballs in the air too! He hit 60 home runs for the Yankees in 1927.

In 1927 Mennonite Publishing House bought its first bookstore from Weavers in New Holland, Pennsylvania.

Since we're in Orlando, we can't ignore those famous creations by Walt Disney—Mickey Mouse films!

The Greenwood Mennonite School in Delaware has the distinction of being the oldest Mennonite elementary school in continuous operation. It began in March, 1928, after the Mennonite students were expelled from the Greenwood public school for refusal, on grounds of conscience, to salute and pledge allegiance to the American flag.

## 1930, 1931, 1932

With the Stock Market collapse of '29, the Roaring Twenties came to a dramatic halt. The "Dirty Thirties" took their place. The Lindbergh baby was kidnapped. Grant Wood's *American Gothic* appeared. But not all was grim. Hattie T. Caraway was elected the first woman in the U.S. Senate. Amelia Earhart flew solo across the Atlantic. And Maude Buckingham Douglass, who discovered Mennonites in Colorado, inspired many by her mission work among her own people in the Ozarks.

Farther north, in Chicago, mission workers began to hold Spanish language services for Hispanic migrants.

It seems rather insignificant today, but what an innovation: church meetings, designed for youth! Many of these were held on Sunday evenings.

The Mennonite college presidents of the 1930s, such as Milo Kauffman, Sanford Yoder and J. L. Stauffer helped our colleges survive the Great Depression. There are many touching stories of their personal sacrifices on behalf of students and faculty members.

## 1933, 1934, 1935

In 1933 FDR was inaugurated into the first of four terms as president of the U.S. He won the '32 election over incumbent Herbert Hoover by a landslide. Promising to pull the country out of the Depression, he initiated policies of the



- Hattie T. Caraway elected first woman in U.S. Senate

## 1932

- Milo Kauffman becomes president of HC
- Maude Buckingham Douglass begins mission in Ozarks
- Spanish language services begin in Chicago
- FDR wins U.S. presidential election
- Amelia Earhart, first woman to fly solo across Atlantic
- The Lindbergh baby is kidnapped

## 1933

- Frances Perkins elected first woman cabinet member
- The first concentration camps built in Germany
- Starvation in U.S.S.R. reaches

disastrous proportions

## 1934

- F.B.I. shoots John Dillinger, Public Enemy No. 1
- Bank of Canada founded

## 1935

- Vacation Bible School movement begins
- A. J. Metzler becomes publishing agent
- Mennonite Church appoints Stewardship Committee
- President Roosevelt signs U.S. Social Security Act

## 1936

- Chiang Kai-shek declares war on Japan
- Floods sweep Johnstown, Pa.

## 1937

- Commission for Christian

Education formed

- Spanish mission in South Texas begins
- U.S. Supreme Court rules in favor of minimum wage law for women
- Amelia Earhart lost on Pacific flight

## 1938

- *Life Songs* #2 published
- U.S. Supreme Court rules that University of Missouri Law School must admit Negroes
- 40-hour work week established in the U.S.

## 1939

- Stewardship Committee uses the phrase *mutual aid*
- Britain, France and Canada declare war on Germany

New Deal, such as Social Security. In Canada Prime Minister Richard Bennet's Conservative government founded the Bank of Canada, and proposed his own "New Deal." But McKenzie King was elected once again.

Overseas, Adolf Hitler was appointed German Chancellor. After gaining dictatorial powers, he began building the first of the infamous concentration camps, and began boycotting Jews.

The Vacation Bible School movement was young but healthy. C. F. Yake and Paul Erb were the editors of Mennonite Publishing House's Bible school curriculum.

The church appointed a committee to study Christian stewardship and to bring plans for an organization that would provide for medical care, hospital bills, and funeral expenses of needy members of the church.

## 1936, 1937, 1938

Women made gains in the market place when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of minimum wages for female workers. The rights of African-Americans to gain an education were recognized when the Supreme Court ruled that the University of Missouri Law School must admit African-Americans. U.S. workers benefited when the 40-hour work week was established. This era had its tragedies, too. Johnstown, Pa., was devastated by flood waters. And the heroic aviator, Amelia Earhart, died when her plane plunged into the Pacific.

The Sunday school movement entered the church earlier in the century. However, in establishing a Commission for Christian Education, the church signaled its earnest attempt to be an educator of quality.

Calvary Mennonite Church in Mathis, Texas, began in Tuleta as a mission to Hispanics in south Texas.

## 1939, 1940, 1941

All the world became a stage—for another world war. Canada joined Britain in declaring war on Nazi Germany. The U.S. congress passed the Selective Service Act, and provoked by the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, declared war on Japan and Germany. FDR allowed for Civilian Public Service (CPS) for Conscientious Objectors, which must include "work of national importance." The Peace Churches must administer and pay for this alternative service. The first CPS camp was opened in Grottoes, Virginia (1941).

Cleaning up after a flood, raising a barn, helping a sick neighbor harvest crops, providing alms for the widows of the church. In 1939, we began to use a term for it: *mutual aid*.

In 1941 Camp Men-O-Lan opened in Quakertown and Niagara Camp opened in Fort Erie, Ontario. In the next two decades camps were established throughout Canada and the United States.

Forty years after mission work in India began, Ezra and Orpha Hershberger went to Darjeeling, India and S. Jay and Ida Hostetler went to Bihar, India.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nylon stockings first appear</li> </ul> <b>1940</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mennonite camping begins</li> <li>New mission opened in Bihar, India</li> <li>Congress passes Selective Service Act</li> <li>Ernest Hemingway: <i>For Whom the Bell Tolls</i></li> </ul> <b>1941</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor</li> <li>First Civilian Public Service Camp opens, Grottoes, Va.</li> <li>Joe DiMaggio hits safely in 56 consecutive games, establishes a major league record</li> </ul>	<b>1942</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mennonite high schools begin</li> <li>Civilian Public Service begins</li> <li>The murder of Jews in the Nazi gas chambers begins</li> <li>The first computer developed in the U.S.</li> </ul> <b>1943</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The Anabaptist Vision</i> speech by H. S. Bender</li> <li>Mission in the Argentine Chaco begins</li> <li>Allied round-the-clock bombing of Germany begins</li> </ul> <b>1944</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>J. D. Graber: "Every church an outpost"</li> </ul>	<b>1945</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mennonite Mutual Aid founded</li> <li>U.S. drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki</li> <li><i>V.E. Day</i> ends war in Europe</li> </ul> <b>1946</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UN General Assembly holds its first session</li> <li>Electronic brain built at Pennsylvania University</li> </ul> <b>1947</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Five missionaries go to China</li> <li><i>Mennonite Community</i> magazine published</li> <li>U.S. airplane first flies at supersonic speeds</li> <li>Jackie Robinson becomes first</li> </ul>
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## 1942, 1943, 1944

General Dwight Eisenhower was placed in command of all Allied armies. News headlines reflected the European carnage: the murder of millions of Jews in Nazi gas chambers, "round the clock" bombing of Germany, the massive invasion of Normandy, and the "Battle of the Bulge."

While the world's attention is focused on Nazi Germany and the Pacific Theater, the U.S. government imprisoned 100,000 Japanese-Americans. Fearing that these American-born citizens of Japanese descent would turn against their chosen country, the U.S. built its own prison compounds.

Harold S. Bender gave a hurried speech that declared Mennonites had a noble heritage. It was a biblical heritage. A new identity could be found in *The Anabaptist Vision*. It was a timely word.

World War II brought new awareness of societal challenges to Mennonite life and witness, and Mennonite high schools were started in most population centers of the Mennonite Church. At first these schools tried to protect Mennonite youth from secular influences. Now the goals focus on integrating faith with all other dimensions of life, and preparing students for service.

In 1944, the Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) Relief Committee received a mandate to begin Mennonite Service Units, thus beginning the Voluntary Service Program. That same year, J. D. Graber became the first full-time, paid secretary of the MBM.

## 1945, 1946, 1947

FDR, elected for an unprecedented fourth term, died suddenly and was succeeded by VP Harry S. Truman. "V. E. Day" ended the war in Europe. The partitioning of Europe set the stage for the post-war Cold War. Truman authorized the use of the newly-developed Atomic bomb on Hiroshima (Aug. 6) and Nagasaki (Aug. 9). Japan surrendered five days later. Estimated casualties of WW II: an incredible 45 million.

Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) was founded in 1945 to help the church practice the biblical principles of mutual aid and stewardship. Its first program was to provide loans for returning CPS men.

MMA was born on May 31, 1945. Twenty-seven persons gathered in Adelphian Hall at Goshen College for the historic event. The Mutual Aid Committee drew up Articles of Incorporation and a constitution. The new organization was authorized to "immediately arrange its offices" and raise \$5,000 for operating expenses.

C. L. Graber, functioning as secretary, was made administratively responsible for the new organization. Within a few weeks the new organization had a room in a house on South Eight Street in Goshen and some stationary to begin business. By the end of October 1945, Graber reported receipts in loans and contributions of \$8,750. He also reported spending \$254.91 in startup costs.

In September Guy Hershberger wrote three articles for the *Gospel Herald* announcing the formation of Mennonite Mutual Aid, Inc. MMA, he assured his readers, would help them find each other.



<p>Black major league baseball player</p> <p><b>1948</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gandhi assassinated</li> <li>• The Jewish state comes into existence</li> <li>• Harry S. Truman elected President of the U.S.</li> </ul> <p><b>1949</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First missionaries go to Japan</li> <li>• Medical and Burial Aid Plans introduced</li> <li>• First church bulletins printed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apartheid established in South Africa</li> </ul> <p><b>1950</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elizabeth H. Bender begins translating the <i>Mennonitisches Lexikon for Mennonite Encyclopedia</i></li> <li>• I-W men in cities start urban congregations</li> <li>• First missionaries go to Belgium</li> <li>• North Korea invades South Korea</li> </ul> <p><b>1951</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ontario Mennonite Bible</li> </ul>	<p>Institute founded</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Mac Arthur relieved of Far East command</li> <li>• Color television is first introduced</li> </ul> <p><b>1952</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mennonite foundation founded</li> <li>• First missionaries to Alaska and England</li> <li>• The <i>Revised Standard Version</i> published</li> </ul> <p><b>1953</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First missionaries to France and</li> </ul>
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[Sections of this MMA information were borrowed from Al Keim's book *My Brother's Keeper*]

The Mennonite Community movement was an effort on the part of church people, who observed the post-war migration to urban centers, to extol the virtues of rural community. *Mennonite Community* magazine, which later became *Christian Living*, carried the spirit and content of the movement. Out of this movement came the *Mennonite Community Cookbook* by Mary Emma Showalter, a best-seller ever since.

MBM's initiative to China was significant but short-lived because of the Communist revolution. You can learn more from the book *We Tried to Stay* by Dorothy McCammon, who died in 1997.

Having been exposed to new worlds, Mennonites would never be the same. The church could no longer remain isolated. A new era had arrived. An electronic brain built on the campus of Pennsylvania University in Philadelphia, would help Mennonites do their new work. We call it the computer.

## 1948, 1949, 1950

National boundaries and names continued to change. The survivors of the Holocaust formed the new nation of Israel. Ghandi was assassinated. Apartheid became national policy in South Africa. Communist People's Republic of China was established under Mao Tse-tung. North Korea invaded South Korea. Harry S. Truman was elected U.S. President, unexpectedly defeating Thomas Dewey.

The Mennonite Church sent missionaries to Japan (Carl and Esther Beck and Ralph and Genevieve Buckwalter) and Belgium (David A. and Wilma Shank). I-W men started congregations in the urban centers where they are serving.

In 1950, Ruth Stoltzfus broadcast the first *Heart to Heart* message on radio in North America, and MMA introduced its first medical and burial plans that same year.

Elizabeth Bender began to translate *Mennonitisches Lexikon* which grew into the four-volume *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, published in the 1950's.

## 1951, 1952, 1953

Color television appeared, adding multiple hues to the black and white screen. The publication of the *Revised Standard Version* Bible added considerable color to the religious scene. 32 scholars, Protestant and Catholic, collaborated on the project. Many Christians considered it a perversion and condemned the new version that dared differ with the *King James Version*. Millard Lind and Howard Charles were asked to give *Gospel Herald* readers perspective on the RSV. *The King James* prevailed in most Mennonite congregations for several more decades. It also prevailed in the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

Mennonite Foundation receives, manages and distributes gifts of cash and property for Mennonite conferences and institutions. Today its portfolio totals more than \$250 million.

In 1953 the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities appointed a Radio Evangelism Committee. It also made *The Mennonite Hour* an "official arm of the Mennonite Church," and agreed to sponsor and promote the program of the Mennonite Crusaders.

Among the hymnbooks listed on the time line, *Songs of the Church*, published in 1953, is likely the least known.



<p>Israel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Songs of the Church</i> published</li> <li>• Dag Hammarskjold elected Sec-Gen of the UN</li> <li>• Queen Elizabeth II crowned</li> <li>• Popular song: <i>Doggie in the Window</i></li> </ul> <p><b>1954</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mennonite Automobile Aid begun</li> <li>• First missionaries to Brazil and Uruguay</li> <li>• Segregation by color in schools ruled unconstitutional</li> <li>• Roger Bannister runs a mile in 3.59.4</li> </ul> <p><b>1955</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blacks in Montgomery boycott segregated city buses</li> <li>• Sugar Ray Robinson wins world boxing championship</li> </ul>	<p><b>1956</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nelson Kauffman, sec'y for home missions and evangelism</li> <li>• Intercollegiate athletic programs begin at MC colleges</li> <li>• Martin Luther King emerges as civil rights leader</li> <li>• Fidel Castro plots to overthrow Fulgencio Batista</li> </ul> <p><b>1957</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Menno Insurance Service provides brokered products</li> <li>• First missionaries to Ghana and Nepal</li> <li>• U.S.S.R. launches Sputnik I and II, first earth satellites</li> <li>• John Diefenbaker becomes Canadian Prime Minister</li> </ul> <p><b>1958</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catastrophe Aid Fund set up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries formed</li> <li>• MBM begins Student Services</li> <li>• U.S. establishes NASA</li> </ul> <p><b>1959</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MBM begins work in Nigeria</li> <li>• Fidel Castro becomes Premier of Cuba</li> <li>• Hawaii becomes 50th state of the U.S.</li> </ul> <p><b>1960</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mennonite Secondary Education Council formed</li> <li>• Congregational decision-making shifts to laity</li> <li>• 1963 Confession of Faith</li> <li>• JFK elected President of the U.S.</li> </ul> <p><b>1961</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Herald Press Bible School Series published</li> <li>• Life Plans, assistance for sur</li> </ul>
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## 1954, 1955, 1956

Biblical justice, read from KJV and the RSV, became the basis for the civil rights movement. The charismatic Baptist preacher, Martin Luther King Jr., emerged as the movement's able leader. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that segregation by color in public schools was a violation of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution. In Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks sparked an effective city-wide bus boycott. A few radical Mennonites joined in the demonstrations seeking justice and equal opportunity for their African-American brothers and sisters.

In 1954 J. R. and Susan Burkholder and Peter and Alice Sawatsky began work among Portuguese-speaking people in Brazil. That same year H. James and Anna Martin and Clyde and Anna Mosemann began mission work in Uruguay.

In cooperation with Goodville Mutual Insurance Company, MMA began to offer automobile insurance. In 1955, the Puerto Rico Mennonite Conference was founded.

## 1957, 1958, 1959

A new era of exploration—and international competition—began when the U.S.S.R launched the world's first satellites, Sputnik I and II. The U.S. raced to launch its tiny, 31-pound satellite, Explorer I. The 3,000-pound Sputnik III followed. The USA established NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), and launched the first moon rocket, which failed to reach its target. The Soviets achieved two more firsts in the space race: they sent two monkeys into the Earth's orbit, and successfully sent Lunik to the moon.

Menno Insurance Service (a stock corporation owned by MMA) was founded, providing access to various insurance and employee benefit products from other carriers. One year after the establishment of the Menno Insurance Service, MMA set up the Catastrophe Aid Fund.

In 1957, MBM missions workers were sent to Algeria, Ghana and Nepal. In 1959, Edwin and Irene Weaver were sent to Nigeria to provide leadership training institutions for Bible teachers in West Africa, and to help indigenous national church groups grow in their understanding of the Bible.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars for relief, channeled largely through MCC, is the result of four decades of relief sales. The first one took place 40 years ago (1957) in Morgantown, Pennsylvania.

## 1960, 1961, 1962

Two men named John entered the world's stage and made their mark in history—John F. Kennedy and Pope John XXIII. JFK was elected the 35th and youngest president of the United States. Pope John XXIII, a bold reformer, convened the Second Vatican Council to renew and reshape the Roman Catholic Church. Both served short terms: President Kennedy, three years, and Pope John XXXIII, less than five years. Both were energetic and visionary leaders.



survivors of the deceased • Eastern Mennonite Seminary begins • Berlin Wall constructed <b>1962</b> • The Association of Mennonite Elementary Schools • Second Vatican Council opens in Rome • The Trans-Canada Highway is completed	<b>1963</b> • Mennonite Retirement Trust established • Civil rights demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama • JFK assassinated <b>1964</b> • Rosedale Bible Institute relocates to Irwin, Ohio • Conrad Grebel College opens • MPH names all stores Provident	Bookstores • Escalation of war in Vietnam • Nobel Peace Prize: Martin Luther King <b>1965</b> • Charismatic movement begins • Draft resisters movement • Power blackout; increase in birth rate nine months later
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Mennonite Secondary Education Council united the various high school programs. Eastern Mennonite Seminary began a three-year graduate program. And Mennonite elementary schools formed an association.

MMA introduced its first life insurance plans—called “survivors’ aid”—providing assistance for survivors of the deceased. Quite a large number of Mennonites found life insurance in its traditional forms to be a worldly gamble.

Another significant shift was taking place around 1960. There was a move, slow but noticeable, for decision-making to move from a few powerful leaders to congregations, and in the congregations, the decision-making began to include non-ordained members.

*Builder* magazine as well as the graded Sunday school series were cooperative publications of Mennonite Publishing House and the General Conference Mennonite Church’s Faith and Life Press.

## 1963, 1964, 1965

John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, and Pope John XXIII died in Rome after a painful illness. Kennedy’s assassination by Lee Harvey Oswald was symbolic of the national mood of violence. Jack Ruby shot and killed Oswald. Riots and beatings of African-Americans by Whites and police marked civil rights demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama. 200,000 “Freedom Marchers” descended on Washington, D.C. The war in Vietnam escalated. Malcom X was shot in New York. College and university students demonstrated against the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam. Some resisted the draft. Race riots broke out in the Watts district of Los Angeles.

On January 1, 1964 we began referring to the bookstores of the Mennonite Publishing House as PROVIDENT bookstores. And speaking of books, we think of the many writers who have supplied us with material. The following is an excerpt from a letter sent to the planners of this meeting from one of the writers, Katie Funk Wiebe:

“I owe a great deal to the Mennonite Publishing House. My first connection was through Daniel Hertzler when he was editor of *Christian Living*. I submitted an article on reading. I was just beginning to freelance. No word from him for a long time. Then I received a letter from him with a check for \$5. But he returned most of my article. The check was for two paragraphs “cut out” literally of the article . . . I still have the mutilated article somewhere in my files. But I was overjoyed. I had made my first sale! Some time later, at the 1962 Mennonite World Conference in Kitchener, I timidly asked Dan about submitting an article. After all, I was talking to a real editor. Quite simply he said, “Submit it.” Helen Alderfer asked me for articles. She was also the first to invite me to speak at a widow’s retreat. So she launched another scary aspect of my development—speaking in public. The summer of 1976 I received a phone call from Paul Schrock asking me to write a manuscript about Mennonite Disaster Service, an overdue project for a 25th anniversary of the organization. Paul was the book editor for *Good Times with Old Times* and *Bless Me Too, My Father*. Mike King has ably edited my last three Herald Press books. I also felt privileged to write two *Adult Bible Study* guides for Laurence Martin. I had had chapters in numerous other Herald Press books. As I said, I owe a great deal to Mennonite Publishing House.”

*The timeline will be continued in the July issue of Mennonite Historical Bulletin*



# Managing Mennonite Memory: Archives Heading for the 21st Century

by Dennis Stoesz

In this column, I want to discuss with you the management of our current, inactive, and archival records. I want to explore the what, who, where, how, why and when of records. What records are we talking about? Who is working with these records? Where are the records being kept? How do we decide the value of our current, inactive and archival records? Why are we working with these records in the first place? When is the when? I believe the answers to these questions are crucial for retaining our memory as we head into the 21st century.

These questions are directed

specifically to you as (a) congregational historians, as (b) members of conference historical committees, and as (c) administrative assistants in various departments at boards and agencies of the Mennonite Church. They are also directed to you (d) as records managers of several departments of an organization, and to you (e) as librarians and archivists at the regional archives. I hope to hear your reflections on these questions, and publish reports of your work and experience in this column.

Several tools have been developed over the years to help answer these questions. Two that come to mind are *The Task of the Congregational Historian* (1994), and *Guidelines for the Retention and*

*Disposition of Records . . . for Mennonite Church Boards and Agencies* (1989). In my next column in October 1998, I want to write specifically about congregational records and give an example of how one church is working with its records.

## Paper, Paper, Paper . . .

Each Sunday when I go to the church mailbox, I find more paper— *The Mennonite*, a letter to congregational members informing us of a new pastor, the Indiana-Michigan Conference *Gospel Evangel*, a stewardship profile to fill out, and the schedule for serving coffee. These papers are in addition to the church bulletin with its "News and Notes" and inserts tucked inside.

What is to be done with all these papers when I have finished reading through them? That question is important to me because my work as an archivist centers on the long-term preservation of important papers. Which items listed above do you consider to be of archival value?

Who is in charge of keeping these papers or making decisions about their long-term value? I throw away all my mail from my church box after I am finished with it. I look to the church secretary and the congregational historian to decide what to keep for the archives.

I must admit that I want to keep everything. I enjoy history, and I know how valuable these papers can be for telling the faith pilgrim-



*Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Indiana, from between 1901-1931. Photograph includes 1901 additions and was taken before the fire that destroyed the church in 1931.*



age of a congregation. I also admit that I am frustrated by having to deal with so much paper in this information age. Why do I receive so much information in my mailbox in the first place? I want to throw it all away!

My ultimate goal, however, is not to keep everything or to throw everything away but to come up with a balanced view of the short- and long-term importance of these records. This is the goal of this column.

## Church Bulletins, 1948-1998

On January 18, 1948, the Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church issued its first weekly church bulletin. The next Sunday, the bulletin was numbered Vol. I, No. 2. I find that this use of a bulletin in 1948 mirrored what a few other Mennonite churches were starting to do. While some churches, like Prairie Street, Elkhart, Indiana, began using bulletins in 1942, it seems this was the exception rather than the rule.

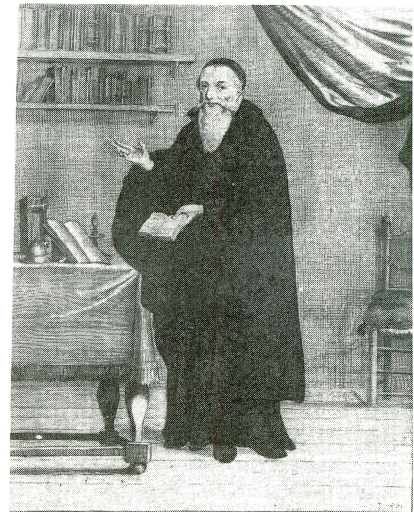
Melvin Gingerich, custodian of the Archives of the Mennonite Church, noticed this event. He wrote an article on "Church Bulletins as Church History," in the May 31, 1949, issue of the *Gospel Herald*. "As Mennonites, we have not done as much as have certain denominations in recording faithfully the events of our American church history." Now the church bulletin can become a "permanent recording of weekly local church history." Gingerich went on to encourage persons who printed the bulletins to keep a complete set at the church and to send one set to the Archives in Goshen.

Today in 1998, we can celebrate the 50th anniversary of the use of the church bulletin in Mennonite congregations. Through these years, the Archives has received and filed these church bulletins into individ-

My dear reader, the truth we testify to you in Christ; you may believe, do, hope and seek where and what you choose, we are assured that you will in eternity find no other remedy for your sins which will avail before God, than the one we have pointed out to you, which is Jesus Christ, else all Scripture must be erroneous and false.

All those, therefore, that seek other remedies for their sins, however great and holy they may appear, than the remedy provided by God alone, deny the Lord's death, which He suffered for us, and His innocent blood which He shed for us.

—From the "Works of Menno Simons."



## CHURCH BULLETIN

Above: An early printed church bulletin put out by Herald Press, Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania. It was used by the Scottdale congregation on April 3, 1949. The congregation had made up their own bulletins before this and had used printed bulletins from some other companies. This was the first bulletin they used that came from the Mennonite Publishing House.

Right: First weekly church bulletin, Vol. I, No. 1, used by the Scottdale Mennonite Church, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, January 18, 1948. Inside the bulletin are two pages of "Church Notes."

## SCOTSDALE MENNONITE CHURCH January 18, 1948

### SCHEDULE OF WORSHIP SERVICES

#### Sunday Morning Service

9:45 Sunday School--Our Relationship to God.  
10:45 Review of the Lesson Henry Mast.  
11:00 Sermon--on God J. C. Clemens.

#### Sunday Evening Service

7:00 The entire service will be in charge of George and Dorothy Smoker, home on furlough from the Mennonite Mission in Tanganyika, East Africa.

#### Wednesday Evening Service

7:30 Prayer Meeting--I Corinthians 16 Paul Erb, Leader

#### Bible School

Cottage Meeting at Raymond McClain home, North Scottdale.

ual Congregation Archive Collections. It is amazing to see such a complete set of church bulletins, such as the set from 1948-1990 from Scottdale Mennonite Church, housed in a few archive boxes. In 1990, Scottdale began sending the bulletins to the regional archives of the Allegheny Mennonite Conference at Somerset, Pennsylvania, which had just been established.

Now as we head for the 21st century, I hear people asking questions:

"Of what use is keeping all these church bulletins?" "Where do you have room to put all that stuff? Aren't you soon going to be full?" "Aren't minutes of congregational and council meetings more important to keep than bulletins?" For some smaller congregations, the church bulletin is the one regular piece of paper that the pastor and/or spouse have produced, and so are extremely valuable. For other churches, the bulletin is just one of many things distributed to mem-



bers: newsletters, "News and Notes," church directories, pictorial directories, financial reports, and minutes of congregational meetings. In these cases, the importance of the bulletin needs to be weighed against these other papers.

I hope to explore these kinds of questions and answers more fully in this column. Part of the answer also lies in having each congregational historian examine what records the congregation has produced over the last number of years. By making a list of the materials, one can then see all these records together and can begin to make decisions on what is of value for the long-term.

## An Experiment at the Boards and Agencies of the Mennonite Church, 1998.

In 1953 the Mennonite Church officially adopted the *Guidelines for Retention and Disposition of Records . . . for Mennonite Church Boards and Agencies*. The focus of this policy was on the "retention of records," hoping to avoid their destruction. It encouraged church officers to be good stewards of their records, to keep them as part of a sacred trust, and to see their correspondence as part of the official records of the church.

Part of the reason for this emphasis on "retention" was that some church leaders had destroyed their papers in the 1940s. This left a huge hole in the story of the Mennonite Church's spiritual pilgrimage. The Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church wanted to guard against such losses in the future.

The evidence of the success of these *Guidelines* is seen in the well-organized archival collections of the church at the Archives in Goshen, Indiana. It is truly breathtaking to page through the listings of these collections and have the story of the church unfold before one's eyes: Mennonite General Conference

(1898-1971); Peace Problems Committee (1917- ); Mennonite Board of Missions (1882- ); Women's Missionary and Service Commission (1915- ); Hispanic Mennonite Convention (1975- ); Mennonite Central Committee (1920); LaJunta Mennonite School of Nursing (1914-1958), and so on.

Now years later, we need to find realistic ways to handle the mass of records being produced by the

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The goal is  
"to preserve  
our heritage,  
to interpret  
our story,  
and to proclaim  
God's work  
among us."

---

church every day. For this reason the *Guidelines for the Retention and Disposition of Records* were revised in 1989. The policy's focus shifted to the "disposition of records." It starts by saying: "Records are important. However, the long-range retention of all records is not important." The *Guidelines* then name specific factors that help determine their short-term and long-term value: legal, historical, administrative, and financial functions of the records.

One very useful guideline for getting rid of paper is to "archive by originating agency. Reports, minutes and other documents created

by one agency and used by another agency is archived by the originating agency."

Recently, I have made contact with the program boards to ask them to take these guidelines one step further by developing a "Records Retention and Disposition Schedule" for each organization. The initial step is to do a survey of their current, inactive, and archival records. From this survey, a schedule can be developed for each board. Of course, this project will mean hard work and will take three to five years to complete.

How effective such a specific records schedule will be is hard to judge, so I have called this an "Experiment at the Mennonite Church." This column can be one place to discuss and report how each organization is coming along in working with its records.

## Heading for the 21st Century

As we work on this specific task of managing records, I need to keep in mind that the larger goal in all of this is "to preserve our heritage, to interpret our story, and to proclaim God's work among us" (mission statement of the Historical Committee, 1995). With this statement of faith before us, I hope we can become good stewards by developing workable guidelines to manage our current, inactive, and archival records as we head into the 21st century. *D*

—Dennis Stoesz has been archivist for the Mennonite Church since 1989.



# Introducing ADAM

## What is it?

It is a data manager system for archives.

## How does it work?

You may enter data such as pre-accession information, accession information, names of donors, names of borrowers, names of staff, collection names, the classification system, and other miscellaneous data. It is also used to update searchable indexes, update cards, and link data. Much of the data is automatically linked as it is entered. Currently the searchable indexes include:

- a. subjects
- b. classifications
- c. collections
- d. photographs
- e. narratives
- f. organizations
- g. individuals

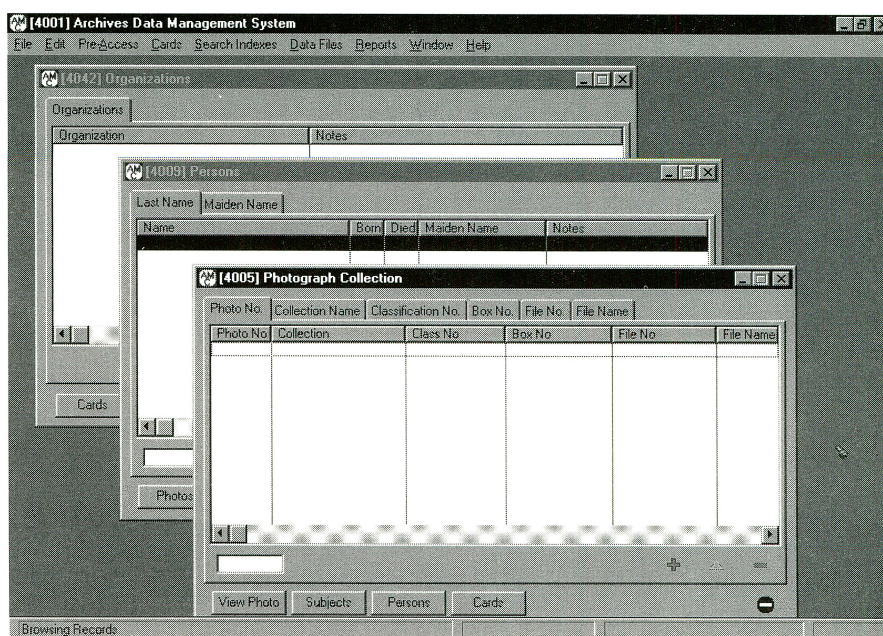
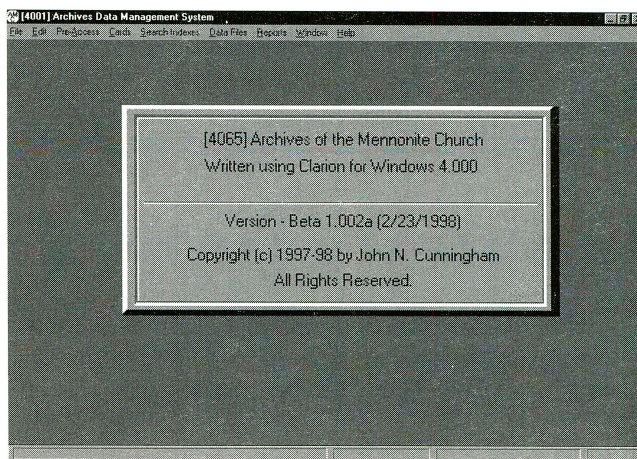
**Another program available at no extra charge** will be a viewer program (available summer 1998). It is a program to allow researchers using the archives to look up cards, use the indexes, and quickly search documents for key words. Data in the system cannot be changed with this program. Some system data, such as names of borrowers or donors, cannot be accessed.

**A third available program, also available at a later date, will be a researcher program.** It allows researchers to obtain data from any archives using the data entry program. Data from multiple archives can be combined for the researcher's personal use.

## Can I run it on my computer?

You need Windows 3.1 or Windows 95 to run the program.

Instructions for installation come with the program disks.





## What does it cost?

\$150 with free updates for a year.

## Where can I get technical assistance?

Questions about uses of the program may be addressed to the publisher:

**John E. Sharp**

Archives of the Mennonite Church

1700 S Main St

Goshen IN 46526

Phone: 219 535-7476 or 219 535-7477

FAX: 219 535-7293

E-mail: [johnes@goshen.edu](mailto:johnes@goshen.edu)

Questions about technical aspects of the program may be addressed to the programmer:

**John Cunningham**

62567 CR 17

Goshen IN 46526

Phone: 219-534-0257

(leave a message if no one is home)

E-mail: [75110.1570@compuserve.com](mailto:75110.1570@compuserve.com)

*(E-mail is the quickest way to get a response.)*

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### Mennonite Historical Bulletin

Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church

1700 South Main Street

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Telephone: (219) 535-7477

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# MIENNONITE

## Historical Bulletin

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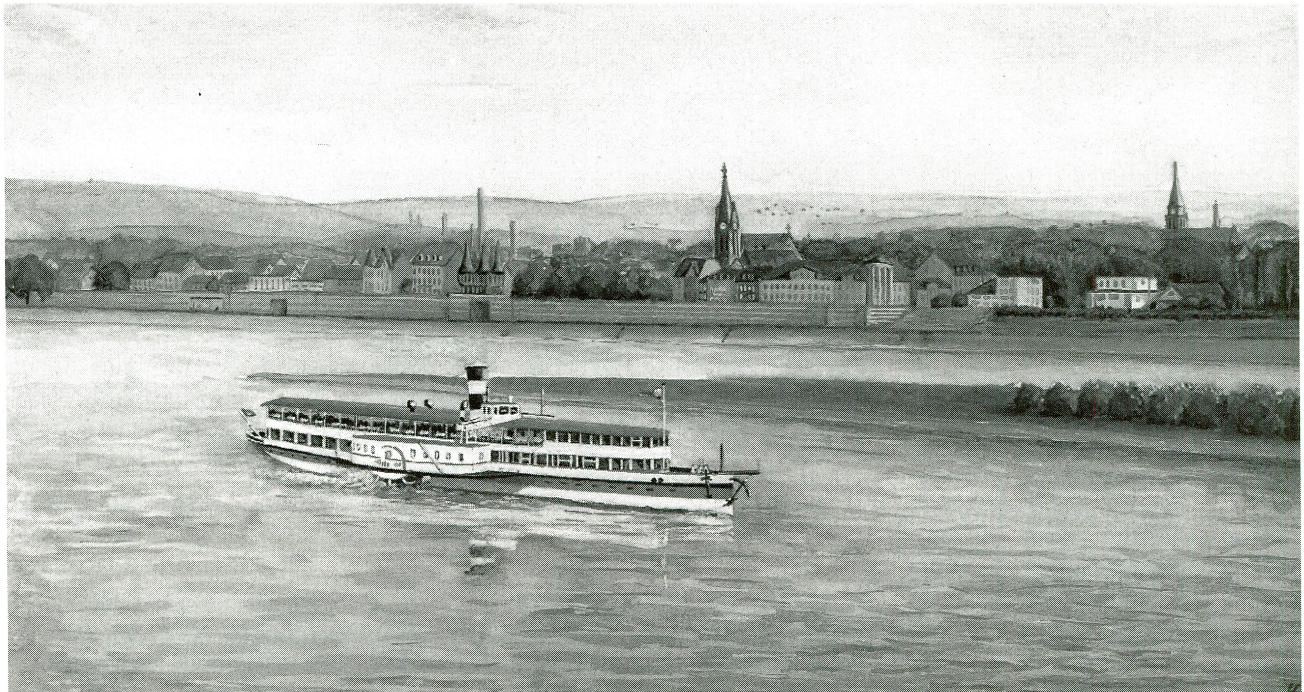
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*Painting of "Neuweid am Rhein" by "K.W." This was painted by a recipient of relief aid as a "thank you" and given to Joe S. and Myrtle Wyse, who served as relief workers in Germany, 1948-50, under MCC. This is one example of many such paintings, drawings, albums and letters which were made by persons deeply grateful for the help they received from MCC after WW II.*

*Source: Joe S. and Myrtle Wyse Photograph Collection.*

## New Treasures: Archives of the Mennonite Church

**By Dennis Stoesz,  
Archivist**

*What follows is a sampling of personal papers and organizational records that have come into the archives during the first six months of 1998. They are listed alphabetically by the name of the collection.*

**Amigo Centre, 1957- , Sturgis, Michigan.** Records, 1996, including executive minutes, board minutes, program development and usage of camp. Twenty-nine computer files totalling 216,638 bytes, as contained on one three-and-a-half inch high density disk. 1 inch. Donor: Dana L. Sommers, Executive Director.

**Believers' Church Conferences, 1967- .** Records, 1963-1997, including correspondence, programs and some papers from the fourteen conferences which have been held to study the concept of the Believers' Church. These materials were generated by co-convenors Donald F. Durnbaugh and John H. Yoder who worked with a larger group of some



twenty persons on a Committee on Continuing Conversations. The conferences have been held once every two or three years from 1967-1996. Hosts have been Anderson School of Theology, Ashland Theological Seminary, Baptist Theological Seminary, Bethany Theological Seminary, Bluffton College, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Chicago Theological Seminary, Goshen College, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, McMaster Divinity School, Pepperdine University, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and World Baptist Alliance. 2.5 linear feet. Donors: Donald F. Durnbaugh, Juniata College, and John H. Yoder, Notre Dame University.

**Goshen College, 1894- , Board of Overseers.** Minutes and Dockets, 1970-1988. This Board was known earlier as the Local Board, 1924-1941, and was known as the Board of Overseers by the 1960s. 1 linear foot. Donor: Stephanie Zeser, Office of the President and Provost, Goshen College.

**Goshen College, 1894- , Counseling Services.** Records, 1941-1991, including minutes of Student Personnel Policy Committee, 1941-1971; program files, A-Z, 1953-1968; annual reports, 1966-85; and program files,

1959-1991. File topics include such things as drug abuse, 1971; sexual ethics, 1982-88; minority relations committee, 1987-89; Black Student Union, 1977-78; Menno Pause incident, 1967; dance incident, 1965-68; discipline study, 1959-68; and student involvement in college governance, 1961. Russ Liechty was Director of Counseling Services

from 1978-1993, and earlier had been Assistant Dean of Men and then Dean of Students. 12.5 linear feet. Donor: Russell A. Liechty, Goshen, Indiana.

**Goshen College, 1894- , English Department.** Records, 1929-1970, including administrative files, course outlines, essays and teaching

[Translation:]

Worthy Mennonite Church in America,

On the occasion of my 79th birthday you have sent my way such a rich and bountiful gift. Therefore I do not wish to miss thanking you for all this from the bottom of my heart. Furthermore, in that most difficult time, when starvation was so widespread and I did not know where I might find something to eat, your help came my way. I keep all of those dear benefactors of your church in my prayers, that our Lord God may protect all of them, and hold his hand of blessing over them, that they may be protected from harm. No humans are able to recompense these good deeds which your church has bestowed on me.

With heart-felt thanks I greet all Mennonites,

Mrs. Kath[arina] Muscheid, Bahnhofstraße 21, Neuwied (Germany)

(Translated by Leonard Gross, December 15, 1997)

*Thank-you letter from Katharina Muscheid, Neuwied, Germany, 1950, addressed to the "Mennonite Church in America." Source: Joe S. and Myrtle Wyse Photograph Collection.*

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**Editor:** John E. Sharp; **Book Review Editor:** Susan Fisher Miller; **Design:** Jim Butti; Contributing editors: J. Robert Charles, Marlene Epp, Reg Good, Rachel Waltner Goossen, Leonard Gross, Amos B. Hoover, Janeen Bertsche Johnson, Russell Krabill, Glenn M. Lehman, Joseph Liechty, Joseph S. Miller, Levi Miller, Steven Nolt, Erv Schlabach, Ruth Schrock, Jonathan Showalter, Mary Sprunger, Dennis Stoesz, Gerald Studer, Wilmer Swope, Marilyn Helmuth Voran, Frank Yoder.

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Dues for subscription-membership in the Mennonite Church Historical Association (\$25 annual), inquiries, articles, or news items should be sent to the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church, 1700 South Main, Goshen, IN 46526. Telephone (219) 535-7477, FAX (219) 535-7293, E-mail: johnes@goshen.edu.

Microfilms of Volumes I-L of the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* are available from: University Microfilms, Inc., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.



notes of S. A. Yoder, who was Professor of English at Goshen College from 1930-35, and 1946-70, and served as chair of the department for many years. Materials also include papers from when Yoder was a student at Harvard University, University of Michigan and Indiana University, 1929-36. The English department existed at Goshen College since 1903, and earlier English professors have included Solomon F. Gingerich, 1905-12, John S. Umble, 1924-54, and Paul Erb, 1939-46. 1.7 linear feet. Donor: Ervin Beck, English Department, Goshen College.



1928-29 Basketball team of the Academy, Goshen College. La Verne Yoder is second from left. La Verne writes in her album: other team members included "Mary R., Hilda B., Amy E., Justina E., and Ruby Yantz. We only won one game during the year, but tied a couple others." Source: La Verne Yoder Hostetler Collection.



**Goshen College, 1894- , Faculty Meetings.** Minutes, 1976-1990, of faculty meetings, including agendas, memos, reports, exhibits and policy statements. The earliest faculty minutes date back to September 10, 1901, when they were begun at Elkhart Institute. .7 linear feet.

Left: Ida and S. Jay Hostetler, at Nyerede, Ghana, 1962.

Source: S. Jay and Ida Hostetler Collection.

Below: Baptisms at Mayera, Ghana, April 15, 1962.

Source: S. Jay and Ida Hostetler Collection.



Donor: Stephanie Zeser, Office of the President and Provost, Goshen College.

**Hostetler, La Verne Yoder, 1914-1990.** Scrapbook albums, 1926-1934, of when La Verne Yoder, daughter of President S. C. Yoder, was a student at Goshen College Academy (High School), 1926-30, and at Goshen College, 1930-34. The first album was given to La Verne by five of her friends on her 16th birthday. She subsequently wrote in it, and pasted photographs of activities in which she was involved. La Verne also kept a scrapbook of her college days at Goshen College, which includes memorabilia and snapshots. 1.25 linear feet. Donor: Jane Robinett, Calexico, California.

**Hostetler, S. Jay, 1901-1978, and Ida (Miller) Hostetler, 1900-1972.**

Papers, photographs, slides and tape recordings, 1927-1976, of their ministry in India, Ghana, Nigeria, and North America. Includes sermons preached in India and North America, 1927-56; historical articles, correspondence, photographs, and tape recordings of their work as missionaries in Ghana, 1957-64; some more general files on work in Nigeria, 1958-60; and personal correspondence during the time of Ida's illness and death, 1972, and



from S. Jay's final illness, 1978. 4.2 linear feet. Donor: Mary Ann Hostetler Melchert, Oakland, California.

**Kern Road Mennonite Church, 1960- , South Bend, Indiana.** Records, 1959-1984, of Tobe E. Schmucker including correspondence, reports, church bulletins, minutes of council meetings and pastoral committee, and financial records. Schmucker (1918-1986) had come to South Bend in 1954 to begin the Hope Rescue Mission, and the church began meeting at the mission in 1960. Earlier names of the church were South Bend Mennonite Fellowship, 1960-62, and then Kern Road Chapel, 1962-1982, when the congregation built a meetingplace on Kern Road. 1 linear foot. Donor: Steve Nolt, South Bend, Indiana.

**Meyer, Esther (Steiner), 1898-1994.** Correspondence, writings, photographs and artifacts, 1910-1980. It includes Meyer's journal of events at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio, 1945-47, regarding congregation-conference relations. The papers also reflect Meyer's



*Esther Steiner, 1921, Goshen College.*  
Source: Esther (Steiner) Meyer Photograph Collection.



*Reunion of eight of 52 American Mennonite men who engaged in relief and reconstruction work in Europe after World War I. The reunion took place in June 1965 at Goshen College. (L-R): Alvin J. Miller, Jacob C. Meyer, Amos T. Bontrager, James A. Hostetler, Hamer V. Hostetler, Robert M. Steman, Christopher J. Gerber, and Walter H. Smith. Source: Esther (Steiner) Meyer Photograph Collection.*

activity in getting a church constitution written, and her suggestion on the use of elders in a church. Other materials include work on the genealogy of Eby, Steiner and Thut families on her mother's side, and of the Conrad, Gerig, Meyer, and Schrock families on her father's side. Also includes writings of her studies at Western Reserve University, her financial journals, and her correspondence. She married J. C. Meyer in 1923. 7 linear feet. Donors: Children, Albert J. Meyer, Goshen, Indiana; Margaret Irvin, El Sobrante, California; and John W. Meyer, Stanford, California.

**Neuschwander, Evangeline (Matthies) and Vernon L.**

**Neuschwander, 1920-1992.** Papers, books, and artifacts, 1930s-1950, reflecting the life of Evangeline and Vernon, and their ministry of relief and service with Mennonite Central Committee through the years. Includes German songs sung by Evangeline in the Mennonite Brethren churches in Ontario during the 1930s; Evangeline's work in the Netherlands, 1946-48; Vernon's work in the Chaco, Paraguay, 1947; and their work with youth in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1950. The

materials mentioned above represent one of many deposits of papers, photographs, slides, tapes, maps, paintings and artifacts that has been made by Evangeline and Vernon over the years. 1.25 linear feet. Donor: Evangeline Neuschwander, Goshen, Indiana.

**Winey, Lois, 1910-1995.** Papers, 1958-1975, on Winey's research into the Business Department of Goshen College, including class lists, lists of graduates and their degrees, 1926-1975. Courses included accounting, bookkeeping, business, commerce, economics, secretarial work, shorthand, and typing. Materials include unpublished papers such as "Business Education at Goshen College, 1894-1952," by Erma Zook; and "History of Shorthand"; and course materials from her classes through the years. Winey was unable to complete a final report on her research. Winey graduated from Goshen College in 1936, and was an Assistant Professor of Business at the College from 1937-1977. She received her M.A. from New York University in 1950. 15 linear feet. Donor: Martha Stern, Goshen, Indiana. *JS*



# Mennonite Mirth

*Mirth, merriment and humor in  
the Mennonite Church?  
Yes, of course!  
Jep Hostetler, well-known humorist,  
begins a column on humor  
in this issue of the  
Mennonite Historical Bulletin.  
Here's his introduction. jes*



## by Jep Hostetler

Hello dear readers, welcome to the humor column. We welcome your input and your surprises.

Prior to the Orlando '97 I was asked to do a presentation on the history of humor in the Mennonite Church. At that moment I told John Sharp, the requester, "I would be happy to do the speech, but it will probably last only three minutes and then there would not be anything else to talk about." So, imagine my surprise when

I found a fair amount of material on humor, laughter and mirth in the Mennonite experience.

It is amazing how the early articles warned of frivolity and jest. We were encouraged to restrain ourselves and develop lives of solemn service. The upshot of the early articles was remaining in control, and allowing our "yeses" to mean yes

and our "noes" to mean no.

Humor almost always involves surprise endings to stories. In this way humor is very much akin to creativity. Both put unexpected situations in juxtaposition with interesting results. However, some humor depends on making up stories or stretching the truth to make a point. Hyperbole is the order of the day.

*Some humor depends on making up stories  
or stretching the truth to make a point.  
Hyperbole is the order of the day.  
Thus it is that our turn-of-the-century  
elders were fearful of straying from truthfulness.*


Thus it is that our turn-of-the-century elders were fearful of straying from truthfulness.

This column will be the place where we can share wit, introduce humorous stories, and hopefully at times be a bit prophetic. Others have gone before us. We are familiar with columns by Ivan Emke in the *Mennonite Reporter* and his

sometimes-controversial contributions to the *Mennonite Distorter*. We enjoy the wonderful antics of Ted and Lee and their delightful productions of *Fish Eyes* and other creative humor skits.

For the past 10 years I have been doing humor workshops and presenting the "Joy Factor" around the country. It is my personal hope that

this column will be a place where we can read fun stories, laugh at ourselves, and observe cartoons that tickle our funny bones. I look forward to contributing in

any small way that I can. 

—Jep Hostetler, Ph.D., Columbus, Ohio, is a humor consultant. He has taught in the Ohio State University Medical School, and is currently Executive Secretary of the Mennonite Medical Association.



## A Century of Ministry: Mennonite Church Programs in Context, 1897-1997

### 1966

- Mennonite Mutual Aid Association begins operations
- Jim Ryun, sets world record for mile run of 3.51.3

### 1967

- Canada celebrates centennial
- Anti-war demonstration at Lincoln Memorial
- Toronto Maple Leaf hockey team wins the Stanley Cup

### 1968

- SST becomes standard curriculum at GC
- The MBM initiates High-Aim program

- WITH magazine for youth published
- Martin Luther King Jr. and RFK assassinated

### 1969

- *Mennonite Hymnal* published
- Urban Racial Council organized
- First U.S. troops withdrawn from Vietnam
- Apollo 11 lands lunar module on the moon, July 20

### 1970

- Student protests; four killed at Kent State University

### 1971

- Mennonite Church

### Reorganization

- Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries created
- "Pentagon Papers" appear in *The New York Times*

### 1972

- EMS consultation on the Holy Spirit
- Israeli Olympic athletes held hostage in Munich
- Prime Minister Trudeau's Liberal Party wins popular vote
- Managua, Nicaragua, earthquake kills 10,000

### 1973

- First Mennonite woman, Emma

*This timeline is a continuation from the April issue of Mennonite Historical Bulletin*

### 1966, 1967, 1968

Canada celebrated its centennial in a big way at the World's Fair in Montreal. Canadians commemorated the confederation that was established by the British North America Act in 1867. On March 29, Queen Victoria signed the documents authorizing the new "Dominion of Canada." The movement for a strong centralized government was motivated in part by the desire to avoid the "mistakes and weaknesses" of the U.S. government, in which the states were given too much power. The bloody Civil War had seemed proof enough. In 1968, Canada's neighbor to the south endured still more violence when Martin Luther King Jr., and Robert F. Kennedy were assassinated.

Mennonite Publishing House faced an unusual problem. It wanted to publish a magazine for youth. It had a successful magazine called *Youth's Christian Companion*, but the YCC was everybody's, including Sunday school superintendents and senior citizens. So the board created two new magazines to replace it — *Purpose* for the adults and *With* for the youth.

### 1969, 1970, 1971

The Mennonite Church, recognizing the need to incorporate its African-American members, approved the organization of the Urban Racial Council in 1969. While NASA put the first man on the moon, the Mennonite Church considered putting its first woman in the pulpit. (Emma Richards was ordained for pastoral ministry by the Illinois Conference in 1973.) Change continued. The church reorganized itself in 1971 in order to better represent members of congregations, and to recognize the congregation as the primary body for fellowship and discernment. Paul Kraybill was the first general secretary of the Mennonite General Board.

Through an MBM initiative, the Mennonite Church launched the Minority Ministries Council with John Powell as executive secretary in 1969.

The *Mennonite Hymnal* made its debut during these years.

### 1972, 1973, 1974

Richard M. Nixon was reelected U.S. President by a landslide in 1972. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger assured Americans that peace in Vietnam was "at hand." But in Washington, D. C., five men were arrested inside the Democratic National Headquarters in a complex called Watergate. "Watergate" became notorious as a senate committee investigated the scandal and its cover-up, complete with "gaps" in the White House tape recordings. President Nixon was forced to resign after additional tapes reveal his involvement in the cover-up.

Perhaps it was the need to shed the doom of political scandal that led to the shedding of clothing in the new fad on college campuses called "streaking."



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Richards, ordained</li> <li>Churchwide Thrust on Education</li> <li>Goshen College sponsors Holy Spirit festivals</li> <li>Herald Press Omnibus Bible School materials published</li> <li>Watergate hearings</li> <li>Militant American Indians occupy Wounded Knee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>More-with-Less Cookbook</i> published</li> <li>The U.S. celebrates bicentennial</li> <li>Legionnaires disease kills 29 in Philadelphia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>woman prime minister.</li> <li>Three Mile Island nuclear accident</li> </ul>
<b>1974</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nixon resigns</li> <li>Streaking becomes a fad in the U.S.</li> </ul>	<b>1977</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MPH produces Foundation Series</li> <li>Energy crisis</li> <li>French is adopted as the official language of Quebec</li> </ul>	<b>1980</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MWC: Ron Sider call for action (CPT)</li> <li><i>God's Managers</i> (Bairs)</li> <li><i>Oh, Canada</i> adopted as Canadian national anthem</li> <li>Mount St. Helens erupts</li> </ul>
<b>1975</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Congregational leadership crisis recognized</li> <li>MBCM produces Life Planning material</li> <li>Tony Campolo speaks at youth convention first time</li> </ul>	<b>1978</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MBE begins Hispanic Ministries program at GC</li> <li>Camp David peace accord</li> <li>The world's first test-tube baby born</li> </ul>	<b>1981</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MBM Health and Welfare Committee disbands</li> <li>53 U.S. hostages are released from Iran</li> <li>Sandra Day O'Connor appointed to the Supreme Court</li> </ul>
<b>1976</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MBM begins Deaf Ministries</li> </ul>	<b>1979</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing Fund established</li> <li>James and Rowena Lark Award established</li> <li>Margaret Thatcher, Britain's first</li> </ul>	<b>1982</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paul Gingerich becomes MBM president</li> <li>MMA initiates Wellness program</li> <li>Canada gets her own constitution</li> </ul>

Daniel Hertzler summarized the Mennonite Board of Education's Philosophy of Christian Education Study. Published as *Mennonite Education: Why and How*, it led to a two-year "Churchwide Thrust on Education."

In the early 1970's there was a consultation on the Holy Spirit, then festivals of the Holy Spirit, and in 1974 a meeting of charismatics at Landisville, Pennsylvania.

## 1975, 1976, 1977

Oil prices were raised 10% by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1975. By 1977 President Carter warned that the energy crisis in the U.S. could lead to a "national catastrophe." He urged Americans to respond with the "moral equivalent of war" to make "profound" changes in oil consumption. Long lines at the gas pump and high prices became commonplace. Small, fuel-efficient cars replaced luxury-sized "gas hogs."

Responding to the new awareness of consumption habits, Mennonite Publishing House published the *More-with-Less Cookbook*, which has become an all-time best-seller for Herald Press. Later it published *Extending the Table*, which took on an international perspective.

## 1978, 1979, 1980

The world was shocked by the news that a test-tube baby was born in England. Lesley Brown gave birth to a girl—the first human baby conceived outside the body of a woman. Intense discussions of bioethics followed. President Jimmy Carter made history when he negotiated the Camp David peace accord between Israel and Egypt. In England Margaret Thatcher becomes Britain's first woman prime minister. In Pennsylvania a small "Three Mile Island" in the middle of the Susquehanna River gained instant notoriety when a partial meltdown released high levels of radiation from its nuclear plant.

In consultation with the Hispanic Concilio, MBE established a Spanish-language leadership training program at Nazarene Bible College in Texas; later this became the Hispanic Ministries department at Goshen College.

The variety of legal entries established by Mennonite Mutual Aid didn't quite cover the map. People wanted to contribute, not just to pay their own insurance premiums but also to help other in need. In response, MMA established the Sharing Fund. Since its establishment, the Sharing Fund has disbursed about \$15 million.

The James and Rowena Lark Award was presented to people who have been faithful in urban ministries. The first recipients were Carl Smucker, Amber Wright and Lupe DeLeon Jr.



### 1983

- EMS established Center for Evangelism and Church Planting.
- Reagan calls the U.S.S.R. "an evil empire."
- Terrorists in Lebanon blow up the U.S. Embassy

### 1984

- EMC&S recognized as church wide educational institution
- Brian Mulroney and Progressive Conservatives sweep elections
- Trivial Pursuit developed by a Canadian entrepreneur

### 1985

- Pax World Fund, mutual funds introduced

- Vision 95 adopted at Ames, IA
- Gorbachev general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party
- South Africa declares a state of emergency

### 1986

- MBE develops Theological and Pastoral Education Council
- Desmond Tutu is elected Archbishop of South Africa
- U.S. space shuttle Challenger explodes
- More than 60,000 U.S. farms are sold or foreclosed

### 1987

- J. Robert Ramer becomes MPH publisher

- ShareNet Employer Plan for businesses
- Iran-Contra scandal
- U.S. microwave oven sales reach a record 12.6 million.

### 1988

- MMA health underwriting guidelines revised
- MBCM produces *Blueprint for Youth Ministry*
- George Bush wins the U.S. presidential election

### 1989

- Living in Faithful Evangelism (LIFE) project
- Come and See Bible School series
- Tiananmen Square protest

## 1981, 1982, 1983

The hostage crisis in Iran ended when 53 U.S. citizens held by militant Iranians for 444 days were released. The hostages were released just hours after President Carter left office. The new president, Ronald Reagan, welcomed the hostages home. Sandra Day O'Connor became the first woman to be appointed to the Supreme Court. In 1982 instituted constitutional reforms, including a charter of rights; the strengthening of provincial control over natural resources; and the recognition and affirmation of the existing rights of Canada's aboriginal peoples.

The Wellness Program listed there in 1982 was an initiative to become pro-active in health maintenance, that is, to invest in building health and not just to pay for broken health.

Eastern Mennonite Seminary opened its Center for Evangelism and Church Planting.

## 1984, 1985, 1986

In 1985 Gorbachev became general secretary of the soviet Communist Party. Little did the world realize the reforms he would initiate. South Africa, increasingly under pressure to abandon its apartheid policies, declared a state of emergency. Desmond Tutu, a respected churchman and a powerful voice for freedom and equality, was elected Archbishop of south Africa. A national tragedy hit the U.S. when the space shuttle Challenger exploded, with elementary school teacher Christa McAuliffe aboard. During Challenger's six-day mission, she planned to teach two lessons from orbit to classrooms across the nation as the first teacher in space, indeed, the first truly private citizen to win a seat on a space shuttle. The flight of mission 51-L was suddenly over.

At Mennonite World Conference in 1984, Ron Sider proposed Christian Peacemaker Teams.

In the decade of 1985 to 1995, MBCM provided resources for conferences and congregations for Vision 95. One seventh of current Mennonite Churches began during this decade.

MBE established the Theological and Pastoral Education Council, one of whose projects now is the distance learning program for pastors and congregational leaders.

## 1987, 1988, 1989

In 1987 the Iran-Contra scandal dominated the news. President Reagan made a secret decision to sell arms to Iran in opposition to his own policy to remain neutral in the Iran-Iraq war. Then Reagan's aides used the arms sales profits and money from third countries to help fund a civil war in Nicaragua. In 1989 the world's attention was focused on the Tiananmen Square in China, where pro-democracy students were overrun by government tanks. Perestroika and Glasnost won the day in the Soviet Union. Solidarity won over great odds in Poland. The Berlin Wall, which separated Germany since WW II was knocked down.

The concept of mutual aid had found its context largely in the family, the congregation, and the conference. With the Share Net Employer Plan, MMA extended the mutual aid concept into business.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The tanker Exxon Valdez worst U.S. tanker spill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rodney G. King beating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Jubilee</i> Sunday school curriculum released</li> </ul>
<b>1990</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congregational Discipling Vision adopted</li> <li>• Lynn Miller: <i>Firstfruits Living</i></li> <li>• East and West Germany reunite</li> <li>• Nelson Mandela released from prison</li> </ul>	<b>1992</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MMA adopts guide for responding to the health care crisis</li> <li>• <i>Journeys With God</i> released</li> <li>• Reforms give legal equality to black South Africans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nelson Mandela becomes South Africa's first black president</li> <li>• Film: Schindler's List</li> </ul>
<b>1991</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pastorate Project results shared</li> <li>• Soviet Congress surrenders power</li> <li>• Operation Desert Storm against Iraq</li> </ul>	<b>1993</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Branch Davidian cult destroyed in Waco, Texas</li> <li>• The worst flooding in U.S. history</li> </ul>	<b>1995</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donella Clemens serves as first woman moderator</li> <li>• Orville Yoder becomes MBE president</li> <li>• <i>Vision: Healing &amp; Hope</i> adopted</li> <li>• <i>Mennonite Yearbook</i> lists 92 women in cong. leadership</li> <li>• <i>Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective</i> adopted</li> </ul>
<b>1994</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stanley Green becomes MBM president</li> </ul>		

These three years were important ones in congregational life. United Native Ministries Council was established in 1987, followed by the Blueprint for Youth Ministry and the Living in Faithful Evangelism (LIFE) project.

In 1989, Service Adventure Units open for the first time. The first locations were in Sarasota, Champaign, and Philippi.

### 1990, 1991, 1992

Once again political boundaries were redrawn and political power was transferred. East and West Germany were reunited. Nelson Mandela was released from prison. And reforms gave legal equality to black South Africans. Soviet president Gorbachev won the Nobel Peace Prize. The Soviet Congress surrendered its powers, and former Soviet states emerged as independent nations. U.S. President George Bush ordered air strikes against Saddam Hussein of Iraq. Operation Desert Shield/Storm took the lives of 100,000 Iraqis.

Howard Brenneman was appointed president of MMA in December of 1991, just in time to face the full-blown health care crisis, which came in the decade of the 1990s. In 1992, MMA adopted a guide for responding to this crisis.

Mennonites continued to sing. In 1992 after many years of careful work, musicians gave the new *Hymnal: A Worship Book* to MPH for publication.

### 1993, 1994, 1995

Violence again struck the U.S. as federal agents destroyed the Branch Davidian cult in Waco, Texas. In Idaho federal agents attacked militia members on Ruby Ridge. Exactly two years after Waco, the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City was bombed, claiming the lives of 168 victims. In South Africa former civil rights leader Nelson Mandela became the country's first black president. South African native Stanley Green became MBM president.

In 1995, Mennonite Board of Missions Voluntary Service and General Conference Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) decided to merge. MDS responded to a natural disaster in Florida.

"By the middle of January we could move out of a shed and into a beautifully renovated home," wrote a member of the Homestead Mennonite Church in southern Florida. He went on: "Many, probably at least a hundred people, worked on it. It's a Mennonite miracle. On August 24, 1992 Hurricane Andrew blasted winds of 160 miles per hour, throwing stones, metal, wood and leaves against the Homestead Church where people were waiting out the storm. Next morning at 5 a.m., the people could look up through the eye of the hurricane and see the wall of the storm on both sides and stars directly above. Later that day people came out of hiding to find stuff lying everywhere, leaves stripped from bushes and trees. Houses of course were in shambles. Mennonite Disaster Services workers arrived from Sarasota. First they secured the church building, then organized us into teams in order to help others get help. Eventually we heard 'now let's go look at your house.' An amazing range of people and groups were lined up by Howard and Jean Schmitt (pastors of Bayshore Mennonite Church) to help make it happen."

Laura Schlabach began work in Mongolia in 1993, and two years later Drew and May Ellen Robinson joined her. The mission work there is part of a special partnership between MBM, EMM, and the Mongolia Support Group, groups of congregations and individuals from Holmes and Wayne counties in Ohio.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal building in Oklahoma City bombed</li> </ul> <p><b>1996</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shirley H. Showalter chosen president of Goshen College</li> <li>• <i>Believers Church Commentary</i>, tenth volume printed</li> <li>• MMA introduces Affinity Life plans</li> <li>• Bill Clinton is re-elected President of the United States</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TWA Flight 800 exploded killing all 230 people aboard</li> </ul> <p><b>1997</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History</i>, 35th volume</li> <li>• 280 Herald Press books translated to date</li> <li>• MMA introduces Medical Savings Accounts</li> <li>• Orlando 97</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dwight McFadden Jr. installed as first African-American moderator</li> </ul>
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## 1996, 1997

Bill Clinton was reelected to a second term as president of the United States, though dogged by the alleged scandals of Whitewater, political fundraising and Paula Jones. TWA flight 800 exploded killing all 230 people aboard in the worst air disaster in aviation history. Hong Kong was returned to China, and as we all know, Mike Tyson bit off more than he could chew in his ill-fated boxing match with heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield.

In the past two years, MPH has published the eighth volume of *Believers Church Bible Commentary*, the 35th *Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History*, 50 other books along with its ten periodicals and curriculum pieces.

MMA continues to explore opportunities for mutual assistance. Two recent programs are Affinity Life plans and Medical Savings Accounts.

For the first time, MBE installed a woman as president of a Mennonite Church College. In 1997, Shirley Hershey Showalter was inaugurated as president of Goshen College.

In partnership with "Friends of the Tabasarans" in Springfield, Ohio, MBM sent Phil and Alice Shenk and their family and Donna Classen to begin work in a mountainous village in the republic of Dagestan in 1996.

Delegates to the Mennonite Church General Assembly reviewed the work of the program boards on Wednesday afternoon in the context of global social history. Oh, that's us. That's now. I guess we're caught up!

### Prayer of Mim Book, moderator of this report:

Holy and reverent is thy name, Lord God of history. We are grateful to You for the privilege of living in the 20th century. It has been a time of creative work, wonderful discoveries, and honorable experiences. It has also been a time of selfishness, sin, and suffering, brought on by human frailty.

Forgive our errors and please forget them. But where we have walked in your way and carried out your will on earth, let those events rebound in memory for the glory of God who will be Sovereign Lord of the 21st century. Amen.

This time line was presented at Orlando 97, the Mennonite Church General Assembly, July 30, 1997, as the Joint Board report. It was prepared by John E. Sharp and J. Daniel Hess, with assistance from Dennis Stoesz and the Mennonite church Program Boards.

Mim Book, Associate General Secretary of the General Board, was moderator, John E. Sharp was the "professor historian," and program board representatives inserted their contributions.

Note—Many other significant events in the life of the church were not included here; only those that were initiated by the program boards and institutions of the church.



## News and Notes

**Howard-Miami Sesquicentennial 1848-1998**—This is a celebration of settlers coming into the area out of which came Howard-Miami Mennonite Church in rural Kokomo, Indiana. It follows the Centennial of 1948. D. C. Myers is chairman of the Celebration Committee.

John F. Murray, past president of the Michiana Anabaptist Historians, will speak on September 27 as a "warmer-upper" for the next weekend. October 3 and October 4 sessions will include a variety of speakers and activities and the release of a publication.

The Anabaptist churches in the Kokomo area are: Bethany Fellowship (Beachy Amish), Howard-Miami (IN-MI Conference), North District (Old Order Amish), Parkview (IN-MI Conference), Rich Valley (Unaffiliated Mennonite), and South District (Old Order Amish).

[From *MAH's News and Notes*, Volume VII, Number 1, Spring 1998]

**Jacob Hochstetler Descendants Plan Big Gathering**—The third continent-wide gathering of the descendants of Jacob Hochstetler is planned for July 18, 1998. The all-day assembly will meet at Northern High School, ten miles southwest of Grantsville, Maryland on US 219. Registration begins at 8:00. The forenoon includes informal activities as well as a variety of rotating seminars beginning at 9:00. There will be a potluck dinner at noon.

The afternoon program, beginning at 2:00, will include a meditation on "The Spiritual Legacy of Our Ancestor," followed by dramatic monologues representing the four children of the immigrant ancestor. A summary of some activities of the sponsoring ten-year-old Jacob Hochstetler Family Association, Inc., as well as a short business session, will complete the program. Call (219) 533-7819 for a descriptive

brochure with more details.

The Swiss-German Amish Mennonite Jacob Hochstetler family arrived in Berks County, Pennsylvania, in 1738, and is well-known for the 1757 attack by Indians in which three members were killed and three members taken captive for a time. Their example of nonresistance is cited in numerous publications since then. Later the surviving children and grandchildren moved westward and they or their descendants were often the early settlers in new settlements, like Mifflin and Somerset Counties, Pennsylvania, Holmes County, Ohio, and Elkhart-LaGrange Counties.

One feature of this gathering will be the release of a 1,200-page compilation by John Showalter of North Carolina of corrections and some updates of the classic family genealogies by Rev. Harvey Hostetler. Current descendants include the pollster George Gallup, Jr. and NFL quarterback Jeff Hostetler.

[From *Michiana Anabaptist Historians' News and Notes*, Volume VII, Number 1, Spring 1998]

**Menno Simons Exhibit at Goshen College Next Winter**—The exhibit, *Menno Simons: Image and Identity*, will appear in the art gallery at Goshen College for about six weeks in January and February 1999.

It will be on loan from the

Kauffman Museum in Newton, Kansas, where it was originally formed to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Menno's birth in 1496. The exhibit will consist of portraits of Menno, other Dutch Mennonite art created between 1600-1900, and images of Menno in recent popular culture. Interpretive tours of the exhibit will be available to church and school groups who make arrangements in advance. The display will be sponsored by the Mennonite-Amish Museum Committee of Goshen College. For more information call (219) 535-7463.

[From *MAH's News and Notes*, Volume VII, Number 1, Spring 1998]

### Juniata District Mennonite Historical Society Acquires Meetinghouse

During the summer of 1997 the Juniata District Mennonite Historical Society acquired the neighboring "Brick" Mennonite meetinghouse and land at Richfield, Pennsylvania, for educational and exhibit purposes. The meetinghouse will be restored to the 1868 period, when it was built. The original pulpit is still at the site, but the benches have been removed.

The Cross Roads Mennonite Church will maintain and continue to use the adjoining cemetery. Contributions for the project may be sent to Juniata District Historical Society, HC 63, Richfield, PA 17086.

[From *The Mirror*, Volume XXX, Number 1, February 1998]

### Congregation Commissions

**Author**—Mountville Mennonite Church, Mountville, Pennsylvania, has commissioned Dennis W. Kauffman of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to write a history of the congregation. Persons with information and photographs may contact him at 721 Dustin Drive, Lancaster, PA 17601. Phone: (717) 285-3053.

[From *The Mirror*, Volume XXX, Number 1, February 1998]

### Historical Center Planned at Fairmount

—Recently three Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, groups—Fairmount Homes, the





Home Messenger Library, and the Swiss Pioneer Preservation Associates—laid plans for joint purchase for historical purposes of a tract of land adjoining Fairmount Homes' newly expanded facilities in West Earl Township. Operated by members of the Weaverland Conference Mennonite Church, Fairmount Homes provides Christian, quality health care for older adults of the Ephrata-New Holland area and surrounding communities and also serves as a community gathering place.

Future development of this property will include construction of new facilities to house the Home Messenger Library, which contains approximately twelve thousand volumes and a limited amount of archival material. Its present headquarters in Ephrata serves primarily the Weaverland Conference Mennonite Church constituency. This new site is also the proposed future location of the Muddy Creek Farm Library, currently a privately owned, Old Order Mennonite historical library and archives in the Denver area.

In addition, the Martindale-based Swiss Pioneer Preservation Associates plan to reconstruct on this site the Peter Martin log cabin, an eighteenth-century structure that originally stood west of Blue Ball.

Grandson of 1727 immigrant David Martin of Weaverland, Peter Martin lived on the western corner of his grandfather's patent and with his family (sixteen children) operated this farm until they migrated to Ontario in 1819.

In 1972-73 the Pennsylvania Log House Society carefully photographed the house, numbered the pieces, dismantled it from its original site (now Log Cabin Mobile Home Park), and sold it to the SPPA, which placed it in storage for later reconstruction.

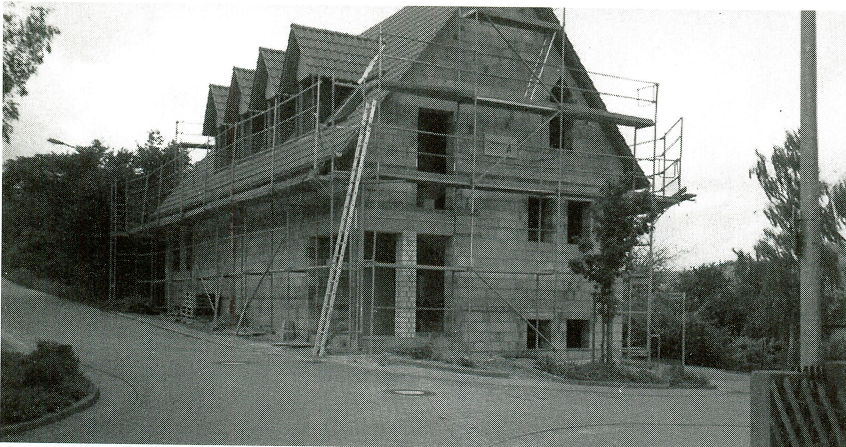
Architecturally significant, it was one of the very rare, round-log, one-and-one-half story log cabins left in the original eastern Pennsylvania settlement area. The original gable-end, limestone fireplace had a bake oven in its left jamb (a rare feature) with the body of the oven outside the house.

The cabin possessed the typical Germanic, three-room arrangement of kitchen, living room, and downstairs sleep-



*The Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church met at Bethel College, March 21-23. This meeting was part of the "All Boards" gathering of MC, GC and CMC representatives. Jim Juhnke and John D. Roth were featured in a public debate on what it means to be MC and GC. Top, L-R: John Thiesen, Lawrence Klippenstein, Marcus Miller, Carolyn Wenger, John E. Sharp, Lee Roy Berry, Nate Yoder, Peggy Goertzen (guest), Arlin Lapp, Kimberly Schmidt and Susan Fisher Miller.*

*The new Mennonitische Forschungsstelle (research center) in Weierhof, Germany. The building will house Mennonite archives. Weierhof is located in the Pfaltz region of Southwest Germany, in a Mennonite community rich with history. Photo from Peter Dyck, Scottsdale, Pa.*



ing room (*Kuche, Stube, and Kammer*) but differed from the mainstream of Pennsylvania German houses, which had central fireplaces opening into the kitchen and facing the opposite way from the Martin cabin. In dismantling the original structure, workmen preserved the fireplace intact by placing a thick, reinforce concrete slab under it, jacking it up, loading it onto a truck, and hauling it to interim storage.

The paled partition between the kitchen and living room and downstairs bedroom was constructed of split-oak pales covered with mud and straw and then plastered white. On the kitchen side were names of 181 members of the Martin family. Probably many more were lost as a



result of deteriorating lime plaster.

According to officials responsible for the plans, reconstruction of the cabin will provide a meaningful educational experience for future visitors to see this pioneer Martin homestead. Some artifacts found on site and a number of family heirlooms from previous owners of the house will add to the authenticity of the interpretation.

[From *The Mirror*, Volume XXX, Number 1, February 1998]

**EnGendering the Past: Women and Men in Mennonite History**—The Chair in Mennonite Studies, the University of Winnipeg, will host an

international conference entitled, *EnGendering the Past: Women and Men in Mennonite History* on October 16 and 17, 1998.

The purpose of the conference will be to explore and analyze the ways in which gender—the experiences of being a woman or a man—has influenced and been evident in Mennonite history. There will be papers on evolving Mennonite concepts of femininity and masculinity, on female-male relations in Mennonite communities, and gender analysis in Mennonite historiography. The focus will span Mennonite history from the six-

teenth century to the present. The *EnGendering the Past* conference follows the immensely successful, *The Quiet in the Land? Women of Anabaptist Traditions in Historical Perspective* conference in Pennsylvania in June 1995. The conveners of the Winnipeg conference are hoping to build on the earlier conference's focus on women's history, and broaden it to include gender history, that is, the way in which both women and men have functioned in their respective gender roles in the past.

Leading scholars on Mennonite history will present papers. They include Marion Kobelt-Groch from Germany, James Urry from New Zealand, Linda Boynton Arthur from Hawaii, Steven Boyd from Virginia and other leading historians of gender from across continental U.S. and Canada. Well-known



Top: Theron Schlabach, MEA editor, delivers the keynote address to a full house at the One People: Many Stories: Charting the Next Generation of Mennonite Historical Writing in the U.S. and Canada conference. The gathering celebrated the completion of two major projects: the Mennonite Experience in America (MEA) series (four volumes), and Mennonites in Canada (three volumes). The event was hosted by the Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C., May 7-9. Ted Regeher, author of *Mennonites in Canada, 1939-1970*, and James Urry of New Zealand were also keynote speakers.



Bottom: Royden Loewen, University of Winnipeg, and Perry Bush, Bluffton College, were the conference organizers. "Now that these two history-writing projects are completed, they said, "it's time to look ahead to see where the younger generation of historians might be going." The goal of the conference was to help erase the national divisions created by the U.S./Canadian border, and move toward a more unified Mennonite historiography.





Storyteller John L. Ruth entertains a full house at Dock Woods, Lansdale, Pennsylvania, May 4. This fundraising banquet called "Stories of Thyme and Place," was planned by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church and the Heritage Center, Harleysville, Pennsylvania. Three more banquets featuring John Ruth are planned for Lancaster, Goshen (September 12), and Kalona.

author and speaker, Katie Funk Wiebe, will be the keynote speaker at a banquet scheduled for Saturday night.

Sessions will begin on October 16, Friday afternoon at 2:00 p.m., and continue into the evening, and all day Saturday, October 17. All sessions will be located in Eckhardt Gramatte Hall, University of Winnipeg. A banquet to be held at Concord College, Winnipeg, will conclude the conference.

Although there are no plans to publish a book on the proceedings, there are plans to publish some of the papers in an expanded issue of the *Journal of Mennonite Studies*.

The current organizing committee includes: Chairperson Marlene Epp (Cambridge, Ontario), Linda Huebert Hecht (Waterloo), Margaret Fast (Winnipeg), Katy Thiessen (Winnipeg), and Royden Loewen (Winnipeg).

For more information or to order banquet tickets contact the conference registrar, Jennifer Rogalsky, phone 204 339-0959, email jediger1@callisto.uwinnipeg.ca. Or,

write Royden Loewen, Chair in Mennonite Studies, The University of Winnipeg, 515 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2E9.

**Amish Arts of Lancaster County Exhibit**—*Amish Arts of Lancaster*, a look at the distinctive arts produced by and for Lancaster County's Amish community, is the focus of the 1998 exhibition at the Heritage Center Museum. The museum opened this groundbreaking show along with changes in its permanent exhibition on Friday, April 24, 1998. The exhibit will continue until January 2, 1998.

Approximately 200 objects made by the Lancaster Amish between 1790 and 1990 will be featured in the exhibition. Included will be quilts, toys, fraktur, samplers, furniture, and clothing. The majority of the items are on loan from one private collection that has never been previously exhibited.


An accompanying publication of the same title will be available for sale in the Museum Store. This work, containing over 300 color

photographs, has been authored by scholar, Dr. Patricia T. Herr. Dr. Donald B. Kraybill, a noted authority on the Amish, has written an introductory essay on the history of the Lancaster Amish community. The book price will be \$29.95 plus Pennsylvania state sales tax.

The museum is located adjacent to the historic Central Market in the center of downtown Lancaster and is open during its season, Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Special extended holiday hours begin on November 27.

For more information, contact Peter S. Seibert, executive director, at the Heritage Center Museum at 717 299-6440.

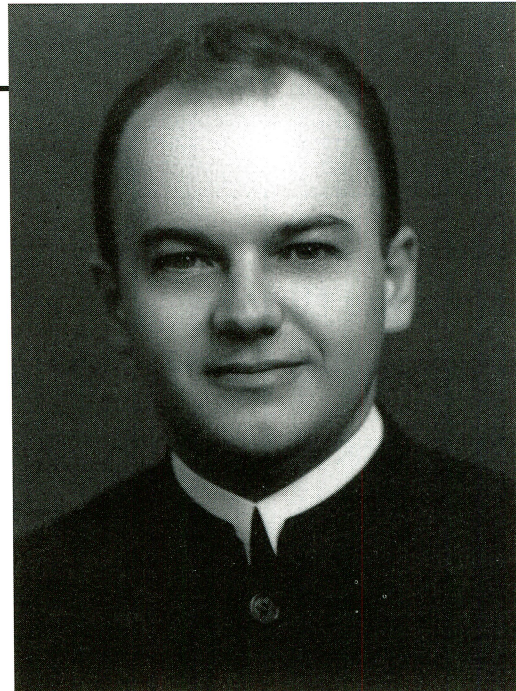
**A conference *Pluralism and Community***: *Conversations on the Calling and Character of Anabaptist-Mennonites for Beginning the 21st Century* will convene March 24-26, 1999, at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center. The purpose is to reflect on a vision for the Mennonite church's calling and role in our changing world. The program includes brief issues papers and group discussion. For program information, write: Senior Resource Group c/o C. Norman Kraus, 1210 A Harmony Drive., Harrisonburg, VA 22802. To register write Laurelville Church Center, Route 5 Box 145, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666.

**The People's Place Quilt Museum** presents *The Splendor of Antique Amish Quilts*, now through October 31, 1998. This 10th Anniversary exhibit features antique full-size and crib masterpieces from the Midwest and Lancaster Amish communities. The People's Place Quilt Museum is located on Route 340, Intercourse, Pa. The museum is open Monday to Saturday 9-5. 



## Remember J. C.

*75 years ago, J. C. Wenger was baptized by Bishop Abraham Clemmer at the Rockhill Meetinghouse, near Souderton, Pennsylvania.*



Of this experience, he wrote, "... I was bitterly disappointed. I lacked a saved feeling. I had heard preachers tell time and again of the joy that converts felt after they became Christians. I did not feel anything! This lack of assurance bothered me until I... got my eyes on Jesus instead of myself."

After this "disappointing" beginning, J. C. went on to serve the church as a minister, teacher, scholar, writer, historian and storyteller. He was one of the most prolific writers of the century.

Read more of Wenger's reflections on his own life and ministry in *J. C., A Life Sketch*. Copies of this limited edition, published in 1993 as a tribute to him, are still available for a contribution of \$100.

Refresh your memory of J. C. Wenger and support the work of the Historical Committee & Archives of the Mennonite Church. Wenger served as a member of the Historical Committee from 1945 to 1973, and as the first editor of the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*.

### ----- Order form -----

**Yes,** I want a copy of *J. C., A Life Sketch*, and I want to support the work of the Historical Committee & Archives of the Mennonite Church.

Send me \_\_\_\_ copies at \$100 each

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Add \$2 for shipping and postage for each copy

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to "J. C. " and mail to the Historical Committee & Archives of the Mennonite Church, 1700 South Main Street, Goshen, IN 46526



# I Wish I'd Been There

MHB readers respond to the question: What is the one event in Anabaptist-Mennonite history you wish you could have witnessed—and Why?

## I Wish I'd Been . . . Among the Illinois Bishops in the 1940s.

by V. Gordon Oyer


The points in history which most fascinate me are those at which the intangible—belief and doctrine—grow increasingly dissonant with the tangible—practice and material/cultural environment. The struggles of individuals and groups to reconcile these divergences reveal much about what it means to be a human in pursuit of the divine.

A recent era that reflects such a struggle centers around issues confronted by Illinois Mennonite Conference leaders in the 1940s. During the preceding decade,

Illinois Mennonites earned a growing reputation as inappropriately lax in upholding the era's doctrinal regulations, and rumblings of expulsion from the Mennonite General Conference surfaced among sister conferences. As Illinois outreach activity escalated in the late thirties and early forties, their increasing focus on bringing non-traditional Mennonites into the fold clashed with traditional standards, some Illinois leaders felt nearly compelled to choose between their affiliation and their evangelistic programs. Compromise won out, though, and both continued.

By the end of the decade, however, these same leaders felt pressure from a cadre of younger ministers to expand boundaries ever farther. Though the conference "old guard" probably remained quite flexible relative to many from other regions, their own expectations failed to

keep pace with those of several younger ministers. Feeling stifled, some of the younger leaders ultimately withdrew from the conference.

During this decade, then, as Illinois leadership sought to reconcile traditional practices with growing evangelistic expectations and emerging "Anabaptist Vision" understandings of the faith, they became caught between labels of "too liberal" for some and "too conservative" for others. To have been among them as they deliberated, observing their efforts to reconcile competing priorities in a rapidly-changing society would be instructive, I think. Of course, based on observations of current controversies, if I were to join them, I'd also want to retain my current perspective of hindsight as reassurance that after all the emotion subsides, life goes on and God remains with us. 

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### Mennonite Historical Bulletin

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*The farm of Samuel Yoder located in Wayne County, Ohio, two miles south of Smithville (Weilersville) as it appeared around 1900. Samuel Yoder cleared the land and his son, Jonathan, farmed it as well. Later it was sold and eventually razed.*

*Credit: Paton and Hazel (Smucker) Yoder Photograph Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana.*

## An Amishman of the Amish: The Reflections of Paton Yoder

I was not Amish. Or was I?

In 1977, when I retired from teaching American history at Malone College in Canton, Ohio, I had only a detached curiosity about my Amish roots. My family was distinctly Mennonite, not Amish! I was not aware that my great-grandparents had lived and died in that persuasion. Nor did I know that my grandparents had made the transition to the change-minded Amish Mennonites in that Great Schism of

the 1860s. I was later surprised to learn that it was only in my early childhood years (1916) that my parents' church had broken further from its Amish roots by joining with the MC Mennonites and dropping "Amish" from its name.

But during those 40 years of teaching, my father kept reminding me of my Stoltzfus, Yoder, Hershberger, Troyer, and other forebears. Especially my Stoltzfus ancestors! My father produced a genealogy of the descendants of my

mother's great-great-grandfather, Peter Schrock, who was a minister in what later became the Oak Grove congregation of Wayne County, Ohio.<sup>1</sup> But still, I hardly realized that these forebears were Amish.

My father loved to tell me the story of his grandfather, Deacon John Stoltzfus, who in 1872, at 65, had the temerity to move from the rich farming country of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to Knoxville, Tennessee, with its red soil and post-Civil War disarray. He took



six of his 12 children and their families with him. Father told this story respectfully, but was critical of what proved to be a financially unwise move.

I left the classroom in late May 1977. At the same time, almost to the day, I received notice of the upcoming reunion of the descendants of "Tennessee" John Stoltzfus, at the Millwood Mennonite Church, near Gap, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. I had no choice; I had to attend—if for no other reason than for my father's sake.

At that reunion I received encouragement to write the biography of this Stoltzfus patriarch, my own great-grandfather.<sup>2</sup> Since he was something of a church leader, this biography, when completed two years later, provided me with a keyhole view of Amish church history in the 19th century. But the keyhole was small; I needed a window, a larger view. So since 1980, I have been spending much of my time enlarging that window.

## Amish Roots

Quickly I came to realize how Amish my roots really were. Just as the apostle Paul was "a Pharisee of the Pharisees," because of his biological and sociological roots, so I am an Amishman of the Amish. No, I am not an Amishman at present, but neither was Paul a traditional Pharisee when he declared himself

to be "a Pharisee of the Pharisees."

I prefer not to carry the analogy any further, for Paul was, I think, much farther removed from his Pharisee roots than I am from my Amish roots. Some of my Amish friends might disagree with me on this point.

My "Amish credentials" are impressive! I am a descendant of the famous widow Barbara Yoder, who migrated to America in 1742. My Stoltzfus roots are represented by Nicholas Stoltzfus, who migrated to America in 1763. My mother's forebears, the Troyers and the Hershbengers, have a similar history.

In my youth I had thought of those Old Order Amish boys and girls who made up one-half of my schoolmates at Eight Square School, near Goshen, Indiana, as belonging to a peculiar denomination. I viewed them as extremely legalistic and traditional, quite out of touch with the 20th century. As for my parents, they were not disposed to talk about the Amish flavor of their own roots.

Nevertheless, I had found those Amish schoolmates to be good playmates. I thought some of the girls were attractive, but I assumed that the gulf between us was too wide to allow for any extended socializing.



*Jonathan and Leah (Stoltzfus) Yoder from A Brief Historical Sketch of the Jonathan Yoder Family. Credit: Paton and Hazel (Smucker) Yoder Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana.*

(But Mattie saw no barriers. One evening after dismissal, she stopped me in a corner outside of the school building and gave me a precious pencil clip to signify her interest in me.)

In my later youth, as a member of a threshing crew, I learned to know many Amish farmers as I traveled to the ends of the neighbor-

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hood and beyond. Here I found them in their native habitat. Here they were at home. I'm sure there were disagreements among them and surely there was some ill will among them at times. And, yes, shunning was practiced. But on threshing days, there was only camaraderie and jocular sparring. It was clearly understood that such repartee was expected be a part of those daily ablutions around the noonday washtub. In spite of my reluctance to use their dialect, they took me into their circle. Those scenes have never left me.

Nevertheless, it was only after I had retired from teaching and had made serious inquiry into my roots that I came to the realization that my Old Order Amish friends were also my spiritual cousins. Coming to this understanding made my research more interesting and, indeed, more exciting. This stance may dismay those historians who insist that the narrator of historical events write his or her account with detachment. I submit that no chronicler has ever been able to arrive at the distinction of having written without bias.

## New Treasures Unearthed

When I began on this journey in 1980, I did not anticipate the wealth of new source material in Amish history, which would come my way in the following two decades. "Tennessee" John's remarkable cache of letters and church-related documents, preserved in the attic of his great-granddaughter, Lydia Mast, Atglen, Pennsylvania, was the most remarkable find.<sup>3</sup> As Amish history began to unfold further, the minutes of those Amish ministers' meetings from 1862 to 1878 became increasingly significant. Clearly they required further attention—and translating. They had been available, but little used.<sup>4</sup> Then in 1997, Amos Hoover, Old Order historian, and John Sharp, director of

the Archives of the Mennonite Church, found an old letter written in 1838. It related to the controversy within the Amish Church concerning the rebaptism of Mennonites who wanted to join an Amish congregation.<sup>5</sup>

These gold nuggets are not all that my historical prospecting brought to light, but they are the most significant. I am indebted to those who brought them to my attention.

I began with my family roots and soon became acquainted with a number of my forebears. Four generations of them—Jacob, Samuel, Jonathan, and Silvanus—were lifetime or one-time members of what became the Oak Grove Amish congregation in Wayne County, Ohio. Jacob moved there from Mifflin County, Pennsylvania in 1818. His great-grandson, Silvanus, left Wayne County for Elkhart County, Indiana, in 1896, where he married Susanna Troyer. Tracing those four generations of Yoders and noting their involvement in the affairs of

the Oak Grove congregation was a warm experience for me.

I learned of the ministry of my mother's great-great-grandfather Peter Schrock, also of the Oak Grove congregation. Two generations later there was the story of my maternal grandfather, Samuel Troyer, who struggled to be freed from the sense of guilt for past sins. Samuel's wife, Katie, was the heroine of this story.<sup>6</sup>

## Imperfect but Worthy Models

These my forebears of the 19th century and their associates were conscientious Amish people who walked in the footsteps of their ancestors, many of whom had suffered persecution in Europe. In spite of their exceeding respect for tradition, which sometimes seems to have been confused with respect for God's Word, and in spite of their emphasis on obedience, which sometimes overshadowed their claims to God's grace, they sought



*The Silvanus Yoder Family, December 1921. Left to right: Samuel, Susanna (Troyer), Ruth, Paton, Rhea, Silvanus, Jonathan. Credit: Paton and Hazel (Smucker) Yoder Photograph Collection, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana.*



earnestly to follow Christ. Although imperfect models, they are worthy of some emulation by those of us who, at the close of the 20th century, would also follow Christ.

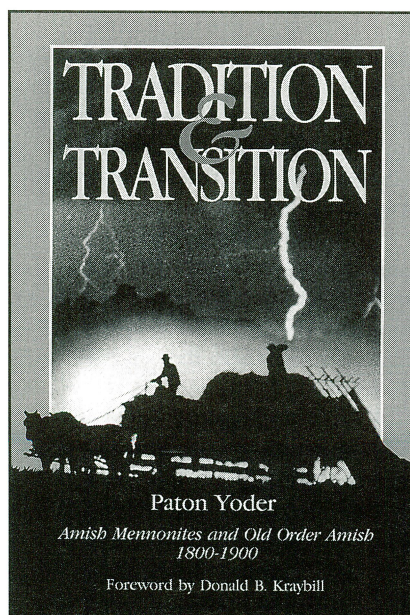
Most refreshing to my heart is the consistent Amish position against reprisal and revenge. Incidents of recent years confirm this observation:

- ◆ There are the parents of the Allen County, Indiana, baby who was killed by a stone thrown at her when she was cradled in her mother's arms while riding with her parents in a buggy.
- ◆ The farmers in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, whose barns were set on fire by an arsonist.
- ◆ The relatives and friends of the Fredricksburg, Ohio, girl who was killed by a reckless motorist.
- ◆ The Nappanee, Indiana, bicyclers who were knocked to the ground and robbed on paydays.

In all these cases, no legal action or reprisals were taken by the victims against the culprits. In some instances, the victims or their communities even attempted to reach out redemptively to the offender. This is a striking contrast to the quick recourse to the law of most present-day victims and pretend-victims.

## Pride and Humility

In contrast to the American norms for the promotion of self, the Amish emphasis on humility is a breath of fresh air. In Amish thought, pride is a cardinal sin and humility is essential to salvation. Isn't it true that the recognition of one's sin and the necessity of receiving God's grace require a humble and contrite heart as a lifetime stance? The Amish even speak of *Niedrichkeit*, the recognition of one's "nothingness," as a virtue. The virtue of humility is so fragile that for one to be so bold as to claim it for himself is to lose it. Although Mennonites of the 20th century find this denigration of self distasteful,



*Paton Yoder's defining work, 1991.*

even so, it would seem to stand many notches higher on the scale of virtues compared to its opposite—arrogance and conceit.

The Amish leave no stone unturned in their effort to detect and destroy the sin of pride, mostly by insisting on obedience to the *Ordnung*. To do this, they try to forbid personal conduct or life stance that appears to be an expression of pride or arrogance. The *Ordnung* reflects this concern. The Amish are ready to enforce their regulations with that ultimate instrument of congregational discipline, the Bann.

## Congregational Discipline

In their attempt to be less legalistic than the Amish, the MC Mennonites have all but dropped their former "rules and regulations." Not only have specific rules been dropped, but also the concept which gave the rules acceptance. David Luthy, Old Order Amish historian, has sharpened the distinction between the discipline practiced by the Amish and that of the MC Mennonites. He notes that

"admonition," as contrasted to "discipline," is the key word for understanding the Amish Mennonite and Mennonite pattern of "drifting." Conference "resolutions" and "admonishment" lacked the teeth that the Old Order "discipline" had. Today it constitutes the vast gulf between the Old Order Amish and the Mennonites with whom the Amish Mennonites united, 1916-1927.<sup>7</sup>

Some would maintain that Luthy has made the distinction between the discipline of the Old Order Amish and the MC Mennonites too sharp. However, it should be noted that after separation from the Old Order Amish, the Amish Mennonites, in the course of a generation and a half, dropped some rules and regulations through attrition rather than by conscious deliberation. The practice of shunning, as advocated and practiced by Menno Simons and Jacob Amman, fell into disuse gradually. There was never a formal decision to discontinue this centuries-old instrument of church discipline. In like manner, a relaxing of the regulations against the use of musical instruments and the photographing of individuals came only after the fact. Most of us MC Mennonites would not choose to reinstate the practice of shunning nor the regulations of a century ago. But we would do well to note that changes in the Old Order Amish Church have been more orderly than those in the MC Mennonite Church, although admittedly, at the price of considerable splintering.

## Assurance of Salvation

Then there is that theological and experiential issue about one's personal assurance of salvation. The Amish say, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13). Therefore one cannot have assurance of salvation until the end of her or his life, and then only after God has pronounced him or her faithful at the judgment day.<sup>8</sup> Here I



must join the critics. I suspect that my grandfather Troyer need not have anguished for years over his past sins, confessed and forsaken, had he had a proper understanding of God's grace. On this point I must listen to those who have left the Amish faith because of its stance against assurance.

I must also note that some of my long-deceased Amish friends—with whom I have become acquainted only through the letters and other documents that they left behind—have expressed, with some poignancy, their own sense of God's love, forgiveness, and presence in their lives.

One of these 19th-century Amish friends, perhaps my closest, is Deacon Christian Stoltzfus (1803-1883). This reluctant administrator of Amish discipline, both in his congregation in Buffalo Valley, Pennsylvania, and of the fun-loving sons of his second marriage, was given to introspection. He said to his deacon brother, "Tennessee" John:

I often have to think of it, especially at night when I lie sleepless in my bed . . . How are we poor mortals to do everything which the Great Prophet teaches us in His Gospel? But yet I hope and believe that the loving heavenly Father is moved to pity me, poor sinner, and that he wants to forgive my past sins if I am to appear before Him on that great Judgment Day. But through infinite grace and mercy, and the price of the shed blood of Jesus Christ, I hope to meet a merciful judge.<sup>9</sup>

The honesty, humility, and gracious stance of Christian Stoltzfus is most refreshing to my heart.

Another of my Amish friends of yore is George Jutzi (ca. 1790-1845) of Richville, Ohio. In his book-length and poetry-formatted *Ermahnungen* (*Exhortations*), he tells the biblical story of salvation. In page after page, he builds up an

enormous case against sinful humankind. Then he points to the Savior as God's answer to the cry of humankind for a deliverer. The buildup, consisting of many scores of four-line stanzas, is overwhelming. Humankind's sins, beginning with those of Adam and Eve, have accumulated until they "heap up from here to God's throne." All have "followed in Adam's footsteps." There is no one "who is not flecked with sins . . . who might have the power to blot out our guilt."

The crescendo continues. Even "angels' tears" will not appease a righteous and just God. There are none so "bold and wise in speaking" that they can persuade God to turn away his wrath. But eventually God shows the "light of grace" to his fallen creation. The King comes, who "will redeem the people from the power of sin and death, tread on the serpent's head, overcome his power, break Satan's lock and bolt, and on that victory hill [Golgotha] free young and old."<sup>10</sup>

Robert Friedmann has characterized this marathon poem as largely descriptive, portraying "the sturdy and concrete Biblical faith [of the Amish] without much emotion." I must take issue with Friedmann. George Jutzi's word pictures are, indeed, graphic and charged with warm personal feelings.<sup>11</sup>

Of my nineteenth century friends, there remains Bishop David A. Troyer (1827-1906), Grandfather Samuel Troyer's first cousin. With considerable help from Joseph Stoll, well-known Amish author, I have translated his memoirs.<sup>12</sup> Much of his poetry, written in midlife during his years of illness, seems contrived and laboriously didactic. But his "Evening Poem" rises above the others. He speaks to God in the cool of the evening:

Oh God, you who have given us  
The dark night for our gentle rest,  
Surround us now with your might.  
Body and soul we commit to thee.



Paton Yoder, Goshen, Indiana

He closes the poem with the following verse:

As we go to bed  
May you, Lord, send your angels  
That they may stand by our side.  
Then we close our eyes.<sup>13</sup>

In another of Troyer's poems, "Now We Commit the Body to Rest," he intends the reader to imagine him speaking to the mourners from his coffin. Written in his midlife years of ill health, he comments on his own imagined death. Here there is no unease or uncertainty about his eternal destination. He is with the Lord. Further, he assures his mourners, with words that seem atypical of Amish beliefs, that upon their own death "this joy will also be yours." He concludes:

My soul has gone ahead,  
Where the Lord will watch over it  
Until the day of eternity  
And of that unspeakable joy  
Which no eye has yet seen.  
So do not trouble yourselves over  
much about it,



You who remain alive on the earth,  
For this joy will also be yours.<sup>14</sup>

## Amish Colleagues

Finally, there are my living Amish friends. These include Ivan Hershberger, who repairs my lawn mower and the Simon Schmucker family, Goshen, Indiana. The Schmuckers live on the homestead of my wife's parents and freely consent to our having family reunions there. Also I want to note especially those with whom I have participated in research projects. These associates include Joseph Stoll of the Pathway Publishers, Aylmer, Ontario; the aged Minister Eli Gingerich, who lives a few miles east of Middlebury, Indiana; Vernon J. Miller, compiler and author of the *Historical Album of Charm, Ohio*; Bennie C. Yoder, member of the Casselman River Area Amish and Mennonite Historians, Springs, Pennsylvania; Abner F. Beiler, librarian of the Pequea Bruderschaft Library, Gordonville, Pennsylvania; and the late Levi Stoltzfus of Leola, Pennsylvania, genealogist and family historian. The list is incomplete, but it suggests the extent of my Amish associates. Without exception, these men have been congenial co-researchers, giving and receiving the results of our common research without concern for who gets the credit for any particular discovery. This is not always the case among writers.

Peter Stoll and David Luthy remain to be mentioned. Peter was one of the leaders in the Amish settlement in Honduras in the 1970s. I never met him, but his son Joseph has given him identity for me. I shall never forget his homespun proverb that "it's better to trust and get taken once in a while than not to trust."<sup>15</sup>

## Conclusion

My Amish connections have not led me to follow the path taken by David Luthy, my closest Amish friend. Luthy was born, reared, and educated in the Catholic faith. After college and several years of seminary training, he began to explore Anabaptist beliefs. He concluded his search by joining an Old Order Amish congregation. I respect him heartily for this, but I do not find it in my heart to follow him. As I have already indicated, I am in some disagreement with Amish beliefs and practices. In spite of this, Luthy and I have been companions in research in Amish church history for the past 14 years. May our friendship, in spite of our differences, continue into eternity! *L*

—Paton Yoder, Goshen, Indiana,  
wrote this reflection at the invitation of  
the editor

## Notes

1. Silvanus Yoder, *A Brief History . . . of the Descendants of Peter Schrock* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1923).
2. Paton Yoder, *Eine Wurzel: Tennessee John Stoltzfus* (Lititz, Pa.: Sutter House, 1979).
3. Paton Yoder, *Tennessee John Stoltzfus: Amish Church-related Documents and Family Letters* (Lancaster, Pa.: Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, 1987). Yoder was also editor of many of the documents found in this attic cache.
4. Copies of the proceedings of these conferences may be found in the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen, Indiana. A translation of these minutes, with annotations and supporting documents, by Steven Estes and Paton Yoder, has been announced by the Mennonite Historical Society.

5. A translation of this letter of 1838, with annotations appears in this issue. A more extensive article will appear in a forthcoming issue of the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*.

6. Paton Yoder, *Katie Hershberger Troyer Hostetler, 1852-1929* (Goshen, Ind.: by the author, 1981).

7. Paton Yoder, *Tradition and Transition: Amish Mennonites and Old Order Amish, 1800-1900* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1991), p. 219.

8. For the Amish position on "assurance," see Amish Bishop David A. Troyer, "Wer aber beharret bis zum Ende dir wird selig," in *Herold der Wahrheit*, Jan. 15, 1886, pp. 17-18.

9. Deacon Christian Stoltzfus to Deacon John Stoltzfus, March 15, 1869, in *Tennessee John Stoltzfus. . . Documents*, pp. 147-148.

10. These excerpts are translations taken from *Ermahnungen von George Jutzi in Stark County, Ohio, an siene Hinterbliebenen*, (Somerset County, Pa.: Alexander Stutzman, 1853), pp. 89-100.

11. R[obert] F[riedmann], "George Jutzi," *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, p. 133.

12. Troyer's grandchildren published his memoirs under the title, *Hinterlassene Schriften von David A. Treyer [Troyer]* (Elkhart, Ind.: Mennonite Publishing Co., 1920). Pathway Publishers will publish this translation in the near future.

13. Translated from *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 76.

14. Translated from *Ibid.*, p. 95.

15. Joseph Stoll, *Sunshine and Shadow, Our Seven Years in Honduras* (Aylmer, Ont.: by the authors, 1996), p. 209.

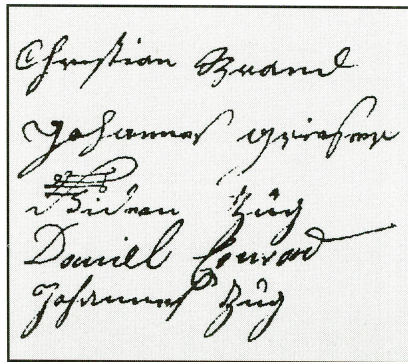


# A Rare Find: The Discovery of an 1838 Letter Concerning the Rebaptism of Mennonites Who Wanted to Join an Amish Congregation

by Paton Yoder

On July 11, 1997, Old Order Amishman Samuel Detweiler, aged 90, of Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, sold some of his personal possessions at public auction. At this sale it seems that, inadvertently, an ancient deacon's almsbook was placed with the items to be sold. Most likely this almsbook was kept by Samuel's great-grandfather, Deacon Christian Detweiler (1819-1869), and had remained in the family ever since. Sam Detweiler is a brother-in-law to sociologist and anthropologist John A. Hostetler, the well-known authority on Amish society. John is married to Sam's oldest sister.

Among the many attending this sale were Amos Hoover, Old Order Mennonite of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, a collector of rare books and documents, and John Sharp, director of the Historical Committee and Archives of the Mennonite Church. Tucked inside the almsbook, Sharp detected a six-page letter written in German script, dated November 10, 1838. When he brought this to Hoover's attention, Hoover purchased the almsbook at considerable cost and with it the 1838 letter.



Signatures: Christian Brandt, Johannes Grieser, Gideon Zug, Daniel Conrad and Johannes Zug.

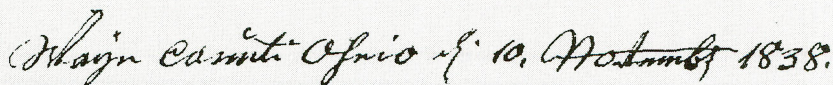
This document is a rare find. Written by several Amish laymen and ministers of the Wayne County (later Oak Grove) congregation, it relates to the well-known controversy of the 1820s and 1830s concerning the rebaptizing of Mennonites who wanted to become members of an Amish congregation. In that quarrel the Amish congregations of Somerset and Mifflin counties in Pennsylvania held out for rebaptism while their sister congregations in Wayne and adjoining counties in Ohio objected to such rebaptism.

What makes this letter a rare find is that it states the case for those who were opposed to the rebaptism of Mennonites. This seems to be the

only extant letter representing this side of the dispute. It is also significant because it indicates that the controversy, which was to have been put to rest by a series of ministers' meetings—culminating October 1830 in Somerset County and May 1831 in Wayne County—remained very much alive as late as 1838.

Finally, this newly discovered letter of 1838 shows that the Wayne County congregation was not only deeply embroiled, but also deeply divided, in the dispute. Although a part of that congregation submitted reluctantly to the ruling imposed by the Pennsylvania congregations, a large faction withdrew in 1831 and met as a separate congregation until 1838 or later.

It is now clear that from about 1820 until the time this letter was written, the continuing dialogue between the two parties seems to have moved ahead not one whit. The advocates of rebaptism said, "Where in the Holy Scriptures can the basis be found that a man can administer baptism in our church who is not chosen and ordained in it, and with whom we do not break bread, nor he with us?"<sup>1</sup> Those who opposed rebaptism replied (as recorded in this letter of 1838), "Where in the entire Holy Scripture is there a law, command, or example where a person, who at one time confessed that Jesus is God's Son, and on this confession of faith was baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, should



Place of origin and date of letter: Wayne County, Ohio, 10 November 1838.



[illegible]


be baptized again?"

This controversy disappeared from the screen of history in the 1840s. But one is led to conclude, on the basis of scanty evidence and some conjecture, that eventually those somewhat unruly frontier congregations in Ohio were gradu-

ally brought into line by the elders and ministers of the congregations in Somerset and Mifflin counties. A summary statement by Deacon "Tennessee" John Stoltzfus (1805-1887) in 1862 suggests that the question had eventually been shunted by Amish elders by simply counsel-

ing Mennonites who applied for membership in an Amish congregation "to hold to that belief [denomination] in which they had accepted their faith."<sup>2</sup>

It seems that Mennonites who had been admitted to an Amish congregation before such procedure became an issue were allowed to remain without rebaptism. But there remains the unanswered question of what was done with those Mennonites who had been admitted to an Amish congregation after that period of grace, i.e., after the Pennsylvania elders had raised their voices against such practice.

A translation of this 1838 letter, along with a revised account of the two-decade-long rebaptism controversy among the Amish, will appear in a forthcoming issue of the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. 

## Notes

1. Elder Christian Yoder, Sr.'s account of the ministers' meeting held at Glades, Pennsylvania, on October 3, 1830, as found in "Memoirs of an Amish Bishop," John Umble, trans. and ed., in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 22 (Apr. 1948), p. 112.
2. John Stoltzfus, "Short Account of the Life, Doctrine, and Example of Our Old Ministers" in *Tennessee John Stoltzfus: Amish Church-Related Documents and Family Letters* (Lancaster, Pa.: Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, 1987), p. 77.



# Mennonite Mirth

*We come from a wide spectrum  
of backgrounds in terms of how much  
permission each one of us had to  
participate in humor events during  
our formative years*

**by Jep Hostetler**

Recently I heard of a speaker who presented a lecture to a Mennonite congregation. No one seemed to laugh out loud or even giggle at some of the numerous humor stories. Following the presentation a gentleman came up to the speaker and commented, "That was a really good speech. It was so funny I almost laughed out loud!" Apparently his upbringing had limited his range of humor expression, and laughing out loud was not on the list of acceptable behaviors.

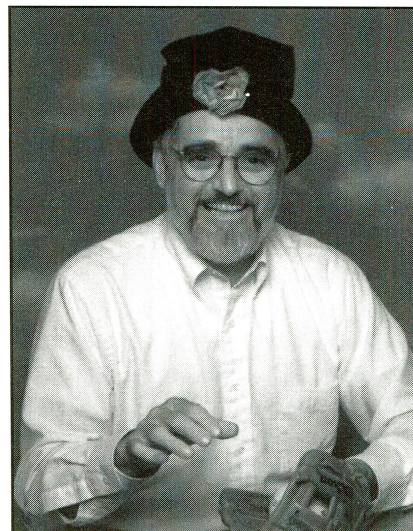
Humor is an intriguing subject. If one were to surmise the "humor index" of Mennonites in general, what would one find? Are we people who are given to laughter, celebration, playfulness, or festivity? Do we express a sense of exuberance and joy? Or are we the people of solemnity and seriousness? Have the duties of upholding justice, promoting peacemaking, and teaching discipleship, with the intrinsic weightiness of each activity, robbed us of the ability to lighten up?

We come from a wide spectrum of backgrounds in terms of how much permission each one of us had to participate in humor events during our formative years. The ingredients that go into making one a person of humor are quite complex and varied. However, there are

three things that contribute to individual "sense of humor" or lightheartedness.

First, the setting in which one was raised has a lot to do with her or his ability to participate in humor events. On an imaginary continuum, one may have come from a home where strict rules and even abusive parenting may have stymied any attempts to laugh or to be lighthearted. This person will have little sense that childhood was fun. On the other end of the continuum, we have families in which humor, playfulness, and joy were woven into the very fabric of the children, and they develop a strong sense of humor. People from this kind of family remember childhood with a great deal of fondness.

Genetic makeup may be considered the second element that contributes to one's sense of humor. Recent research suggests that as much as 50 percent of our makeup is genetically predisposed when it comes to lightheartedness or dourness. As an example, one could give lighthearted people a great deal of grief or sorrow, and within about six months, they will be lighthearted again. They are buoyant and flexible. On the other hand, give sour or dour people a great deal of fun, pleasure, and adventure, and within about six months, they will be sour again. They tend to be less buoyant and less flexible than peo-



ple with a stronger sense of humor.

Third, it is clear that one's religious or moral teaching has something to do with how well one can participate in mirthful events. In our own history, in the early part of this century, there were Mennonite writings that clearly directed one to be solemn. As just one example, John M. Brenneman, in the book *Plain Teachings*, has a short chapter titled "Christians Ought Not Laugh Aloud." Brenneman asserts that there are abundant biblical edicts against laughter, including the lack of any evidence that Jesus laughed. The chapter heading has a subtitle, "I said of laughter. 'It is mad'" (Ecclesiastes 2:2). Ecclesiastes 7 is used to suggest that we must squelch laughter. Verse 6 states, "For as the crackling of thorns under the pot, so is the laughter of the fool." Brenneman then quotes the apocraphal book of Ecclesiasticus, "A fool lifts up his voice with laughter, but a wise man doth scarce smile a little" (21:20). Luke 6:25 says, "Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep." This book is just one example of the writings against levity.

In future columns I will be looking specifically at our own Mennonite heritage in an attempt to discover factors that contribute to "Mennonite humor." First, I will be developing a bibliography of material that has been written by



Mennonite or Mennonite-related writers regarding humor, festivity and laughter. Second, I will have an ongoing segment of the column that will accept, promote, screen and print examples of Mennonite humor. This material can include jokes by and about Mennonite-type folks. Third, if time and space permits, I may develop a section related to several current or historical individuals to see what shape their sense of humor takes. (A good example here would be J. C. Wenger and his many humorous stories.)

In addition, I intend to develop material that relates to humor work and how this mode of ministry can be used by all types of individuals, regardless of one's background, genetic makeup, or upbringing.

The bibliographical material will be helpful in pointing us toward all types of media, from the now defunct *Mennonite Distorter* and writers like Ivan Emke, to internet sites like *Mennonot* as well as material in the *Mennonite Weekly Review*, *Gospel Herald*, *The Mennonite*, and related publications. The joke or humor section will help us to look at ourselves in a more lighthearted manner.

I look forward to developing this column over the next period of time. Please feel free to offer material and to send your ideas for consideration in developing this humor theme.

In the meantime, you probably did not know that Noah's wife was Joan of Arc, or that the epistles were the wives of the apostles, or that Solomon had over 700 porcupines. I didn't think so. *J*

—Jep Hostetler, Ph.D., Columbus, Ohio, is a humor consultant. He has taught in the Ohio State University Medical School and is currently executive secretary of the Mennonite Medical Association.

These are rather weighty titles for a light-hearted humorist! —jes

# Managing Mennonite Memory: Congregational Archival Records

by Dennis Stoesz

In the last column, I wrote about the management of current, inactive, and archival records (April 1998). Now I would like to be more specific and explore the what, the when, the where, the who, and the how of working with congregational records. Here is one church's experience.

## In Progress: East Goshen Mennonite Church

At East Goshen Mennonite Church, where I attend, a few interested persons met recently to discuss this task. The church had celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1992 by having a reunion of former pastors and members. But little work had been done with the older records. Now was an appropriate time also to do something because there was a change of pastors and a church secretary.

The interested persons included the current and former congregational historians and myself. We also quickly solicited the help of the chair of the Property Commission, the administrative assistant, and the new pastor in making some decisions.

## Church Secretary's Office

One of the first things was to take a tour of the church to see where the current and older records were located. The first stop was the church secretary's office. Marcella showed the committee three four-drawer filing cabinets that contained current and older records. She said she was in the process of cleaning them up. She was putting older materials, which dated from about 1986 to 1997, into the beige filing cabinet (four drawers) and keeping more current records in the two black cabinets (eight drawers).

She also indicated that a part-time secretary had gone through these files earlier and pulled out the much older files, which dated from 1946-1986. These filled up seven Archival Banker Boxes. The year 1986 was a natural cutoff point, since it marked the change of pastors from Cliff Miller (1973-1986) to a team ministry of Dave Miller and Bob Keener, plus several shorter-term ministers (1986-1997).

## Historical Records Filing Cabinet

After hearing about this work, the committee felt it would be important to have some historical records remain in the main church office. It was a central and natural place of activity for the church,





*Church Secretary's Office. Recommendation is that Historical Files of the church be filed and stored in the beige filing cabinet. Credit: Dennis Stoesz.*

where persons like the pastor, the secretary, church officers, and other members could have quick access to the heritage and history of the church.

They thought the beige four-drawer filing cabinet would be ideal for this, and that it could then be marked "Historical Files." The top drawer, for example, would include such things as a sample of old church bulletins, an old church directory, the constitution, newsletters, etc. The other three drawers could be a place where the inactive records from 1986-1996 could be stored. Although these records were not needed on a day-to-day basis, they provided an important memory for the church.

The committee tested this idea with the church secretary and the pastor, Steve, and received their green light. They also seemed grateful that someone was figuring out how to work with the older records of the church.

The next step would be to go through these four drawers and make a list of file titles found in this cabinet. This list would be the base from which one could discern what files were of long-term historical value.

## An Archives Room

The next stop in the tour of the church was a storage room in the basement, which was located off the side of one of the Sunday school rooms. It was filled with the old church pulpit, Sunday school curriculum, trophies from several sports events, several unidentified boxes, and some photograph albums. The congregational historian indicated that the photograph albums were valuable and should be kept. These albums were the result of the work of designated church photographers, paid by the church to take pictures at special events.

John, the chair of the Property Commission, then showed the committee another smaller room in the basement across from the elevator. It was 3' by 5' by 9' tall. It also had some shelves in it, and it had a door with a lock on it. The committee agreed that this would be an ideal place for the beginning of an East Goshen Archives Room. Here is



*The newly designated Archives Room across from the elevator, with Dan Hochstetler standing in doorway. Recommendation is that the important older and bulkier church records be stored here. Credit: Dennis Stoesz.*

where the older and bulkier church records could be stored. A key could be provided to each committee member for access to this room.

The committee then decided to transfer the seven Archival Banker Boxes of records into this room. These were the boxes that were being stored in the church office. The photograph albums would also be transferred here, plus any other older church records.

Dan, the congregational historian, reported that he had done a cursory inventory of these boxes. They contained: (1) church bulletins, 1946-1996, but with a gap for the years 1960-1984; (2) the newsletter called *Church Visitor*, 1960-1996, but with a gap from 1960-1978; (3) several church directories; (4) official church records, 1946-1986, filed alphabetically from A-Z, and found in four boxes; (5) MYF photograph album, 1979-1990; and (6) special events photograph album, 1987-1989.

The committee thought the next steps would be to complete the set of church bulletins and newsletters and to make a file folder listing of official church records, 1946-1986. This listing would be filed in the top drawer of the Historical Records filing cabinet in the church office, so the pastor, secretary, and church officers would know what was in the Archives Room.

## Tape Recordings of Special Events and Worship Services

I reported that I had recently received a whole bunch of older cassette tapes from the librarian when she had cleaned out the library. These tapes were of worship services. They had been cataloged into the library and used by church members. But now most of the older ones that were over a year old were no longer needed, and the librarian wanted to know what to do with them. I reported that he thought this



would be a good opportunity for him to go through these tapes and see if there were any that should be kept.

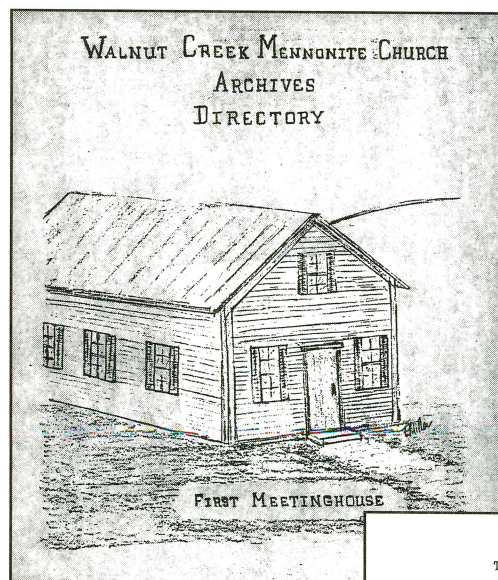
The librarian found a total of 342 tapes dating from 1975-1997. There were, however, only 91 tapes from 1975 to 1993, and most of these tapes were of special church events. The committee decided to keep half of these older tapes, plus the tapes that focused specifically on East Goshen church events. We discarded tapes of conferences and special speakers that took place outside of the church.

Which of the 250 tapes from 1994-1997, when the church regularly recorded and kept tapes of all worship services, should be kept? In going through this list of tapes, the committee decided to keep only representative tapes of various speakers and services. This amounted to 25 percent of the tapes.

## Photographs, History, Old Record Books, Video Tapes

Other older materials began surfacing. Melvin indicated that he still had some old photographs that he had collected during the 50th anniversary of the church. He also had done some research and had written a chronology that listed pastors, changes in the church building, and membership. John noted that he had found an old Mennonite Youth Fellowship minute book when they had repainted the MYF room. Dan said that he knew that some videotapes had been made of several special events of the church. He noted further that I had collected those 120 cassette tapes.

The committee felt good that they could now say they had two places to put these materials. They could go either into the Historical Files in the main church office or, if the materials were bulky, they could be placed in the Archives Room downstairs.



Left: Directory of church archives by Roscoe Miller, congregational historian.

Below: Table of contents shows materials dating from 1862 to 1986 and some historical articles dating back to 1703.

## Directory of Archives

Besides finding a place to put the records, an end result of this work would be to make an inventory of the church's historical records. A good example of such a listing is the one given me by Roscoe Miller, historian at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church. In the preface, Miller writes:

"The first effort at documenting records of the church does not claim perfection. Materials have been found at unlikely places; others have been donated during the recent past. We hope this initial effort will help anyone doing research. We are grateful for a separate and rather adequate room. Members should feel free to use the archives."

The table of contents lists the various categories of materials that have been collected. The next 15 pages list the individual items.

I found materials in the directory dating as far back as the 1850s and as recent as the 1980s. There were also some historical articles that reached back to 1703. This directory provided me with a quick glimpse

### Table of Contents

Aid Fund, 1897-1965	1	Hymn and Song Books	6
Annual Reports, 1955-1986	1	History, 1703-1978	6-7
Artifacts, 1862	1	Leadership Timeline	8
Ausbund	1	Membership Records, 1928-1975	8
Bibles, 1874-1902	2	Newspapers, 1903-1985	9
Booklets, 1881-1986	2-3	Peace, 1986	9
Blue Prints, 1975	3	Printed Programs, 1909-1984	10-11
Bulletins		Pictures, 1919-1986	12
Business Meetings, 1884-1957	3	Sermon Notes, 1933-1943	13
Cemetery Records, 1888-1983	4	Summer Bible School, 1939-1984	13A
Conference Reports, 1893-1969	4	Sunday School, 1889-1986	14
Church Council, 1954-1970	5	Tapes, 1975, 1978	15
Directories, 1968-69	5	Treasurer's Reports, 1897-1963	15

into the rich documents from the faith and heritage of the Walnut Creek Mennonite congregation from its beginnings in 1862 to the present.

## Regional Archives

What then is the relationship between the congregation and the regional archives? What is the purpose of the regional archives? I would emphasize that a congregation should be in touch with their regional archives. For many years, it has been the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church and the conference historians of the various conferences who have actively collected, organized, and housed the archival records of their areas. This





*Church Life and History Committee. (L-R): Dennis Stoesz, Dan Hochstetler (congregational historian), John C. Miller (Property Commission chair), Melvin Voran, Marcella Hersherberger (administrative assistant), and Steve Slagel (pastor).*

has included collecting congregational records.

For example, the Archives here at Goshen has been the repository for the congregations of the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, including East Goshen Mennonite Church. In checking East Goshen's congregational box, one finds a complete set of church bulletins from 1946-1997. One also finds several old photographs and a few tape recordings. This is the result of the regional archives actively collecting these records.

It would be advantageous for each congregational historian to go to the regional archives to make a list of what is found in their congregational box. Some things in that box may duplicate what is found at the church, but that means that the church has a second insurance set available to them.

In the end, it is an encouragement to the persons at the regional archives to see historians from the local congregations actively collecting records. The regional archivist would be able to provide further guidance on what is of long-term value, how best to store the records,

and how to organize and make a list of them.

With the great amount of paper generated by congregations since the 1950s, I think it will also prove helpful for both congregational historian and archivist to put their heads together to decide what materials are of ultimate historic and archival value. This value is not uniform for every congregation, since each has its own history and way of collecting their records.

Space can also be a premium at a regional archives, which is not equipped to handle the large amounts of paper generated by a congregation. It is advantageous for the church to take responsibility in collecting its own records and, with the regional archives, deciding what records are of most value.

At some point a congregation may decide to transfer certain older historical records to the regional archives. For example, the Holdeman Mennonite Church, Wakarusa, Indiana, has deposited its old membership record book in their congregational box at the Archives. In the end, a regional archives may become the main

repository for the most valuable older church records.

Another reason to visit the regional archives is to see the broader history and life of an individual congregation. For example, at the Archives of the Mennonite Church in Goshen, one can page through the record books of the Young People's Christian Association of Goshen College to find that these young people held Sunday schools in East Goshen from the 1920s to the 1940s. This is the background of the official founding of the church in 1942.

## The Task of the Congregational Historian

I cannot begin to cover all the aspects of this work in this one article, but hopefully the examples above will offer some encouragement and guidelines. I would also like to point you to the 20-page booklet *The Task of the Congregational Historian* (1994), available for \$2.00. It includes sections on (1) collecting, (2) preservation, (3) interpreting your church's history, (4) directory of regional archives, (5) suggestions on writing a congregational history, and (6) conservation supplies.

Another good resource put out by the General Conference and Mennonite Brethren churches is the 30-page *Heritage Preservation*, by David A. Haury (1993), available for \$5.00. It covers almost all aspects of this work. Both these books can be ordered from the Archives of the Mennonite Church, here in Goshen.

## The Story of Your Congregational Records

In my work, I keep hearing stories of how various churches have worked with their records. Yesterday I heard that Salem Mennonite Church, near Goshen,



Indiana, had built cabinets upstairs in the men's coatroom, which was no longer being used. This is a natural place to start housing some of the older records. This spring I received a telephone call from Southside Fellowship, Elkhart, Indiana, asking how one decides how long to keep sermon tapes. I did not hear the final results.

This spring I also saw the display case that Forks Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Indiana, had built. Here the story was told of all the missionaries that have been sent out from this congregation. Several years ago Roscoe Miller had shown me the Archives Room at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Last year I talked with Joel Troyer over the telephone and discussed his efforts at the Parkview Mennonite Church, Kokomo, Indiana. I heard that North Main Street Mennonite Church, Nappanee, Indiana, has a Homer North Historical Library, named after a former minister.

When I visited with Illinois congregational historians at a workshop in Metamora two years ago, my impression was that it is easier to have anniversary celebrations than find a handle to work with older church records. But I also sensed an eagerness among the 24 workshop participants to start working with their church records.

I would invite you to send in a report of the work that has been done with your church's records. I would then incorporate it into this column. This can be one way we can encourage and help each other

preserve and tell our story of faith and heritage.

I will end with a story. When I was in my teen years and showed some interest in our church's history, my father took me to church and showed me a room that had been specially built to house the church's records. He opened the door, and when I walked in, all I saw was an empty room. My father explained that it was going to become a place to house older records. That was 30 years ago. I wonder what that room now contains.

In the next article for this column (April 1999), I plan to write about the current, inactive, and archival records of the boards and agencies of the Mennonite Church. *✍*

## Correction

Included in the Esther (Steiner) Meyer (1898-1994) Collection is her research and interest in the genealogy of the Eby, Steiner, and Thut families, which are from Esther's side of the family. The collection also contains genealogical records from the Conrad, Gerig, Meyer, and Schrock families which are from her spouse's (J. C. Meyer, 1888-1969) side of the family. (The mistake ran on page 4 of the July 1998 *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*, in describing the Esther (Steiner) Meyer Collection)

## Photo Addition: MPH-1

Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1911. Mary Mellinger sent this picture postcard to Clara Steiner in the House's early days. This year the Publishing House is celebrating its 90th year, 1908-1998. Source: Esther (Steiner) Meyer Collection.



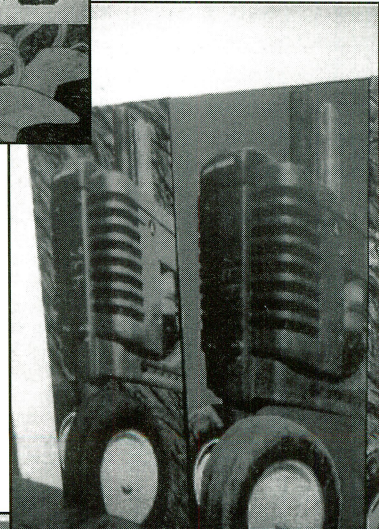
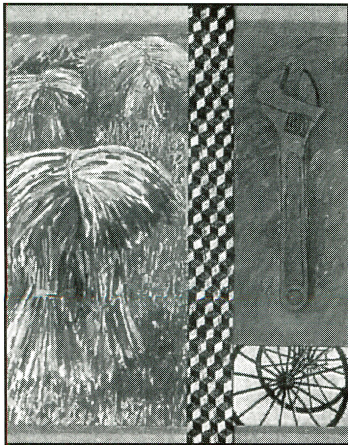
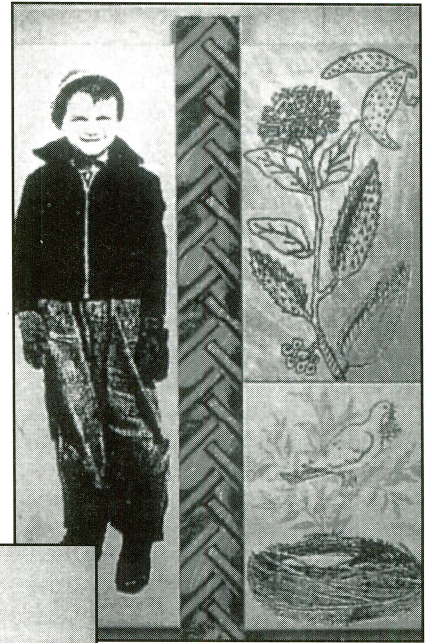


# Heritage Works: An Invitation to Discuss Identity

Abner Hershberger is taking his show on the road. *Heritage Works* is a reflection of his own life on a mid-western family farm. But his images aren't limited to the John Deere tractors he used in the North Dakota fields. They also include plain coats, coverings, and bonnets—what he calls “Mennonite iconography.” Alongside these mostly somber Mennonite icons, he places brightly colored “flamboyant,” “worldly” images. Like the red necktie he didn't get.

Abner, the ninth of 10 children, grew up on a farm near Fargo, North Dakota. His father was Mennonite deacon and preacher in the Casselton Mennonite Church. Since Abner's interest in art was not seen

as an asset at home, this gift was not affirmed. But his painter uncle, Ezra Hershberger at Goshen College, inspired him. Abner left the farm to study art. He has taught painting at Goshen College since 1965.





I suggested to Abner that *Heritage Works* can help us talk about Mennonite identity. Identity is on top of the agenda as we move toward the creation of a new Mennonite Church. The integration of the Mennonite Church with the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada forces us to wrestle with this issue.

*Heritage Works*, presently at the Mennonite Heritage Center, Harleysville, Pennsylvania, until March 31, will be shown at Lancaster Mennonite Historical Museum, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, April 3-October 30, 1999; and at Historical Sauder Village Greenberg Gallery, Archbold, Ohio, May-July 4, 2000. If your local historical committee, or several congregations, would like to host Abner's exhibit, contact our office. —jes

Abner writes about his work. "*Heritage Works* is an attempt to express and record midwest rural communal life. Having grown up in a Mennonite family and having lived on a farm near Fargo, North Dakota, during the formative years, my life and worldview were strong-

ly influenced by farm work, reliance on family, and a strong identity with the church community.

"Expression of these influences are sought through imagery that symbolized directness, truth telling, and simplicity which characterized Mennonite life. These virtues find expression through the directness of photo silk-screened images on untreated cotton duck canvas. This is done with a minimum of flair, without pretentiousness, and usually in a modes monochromatic style. Occasionally, this Spartan approach is contrasted with brightly painted elements which are flamboyant and more embellished, signaling secular society and the lure of 'worldly' enticements. Dividing the painting surface into components symbolizes these disparate entities, in which aesthetically, a harmonious single environment is sought. The objective is an aesthetic, which is driven by integrity of philosophy, theology, and practice.

"I approach these new works with concerns that they not be burdened with didactic nor sentimental content. My intent is to stay focused on an aesthetic that combines honest, formal, visual strategies with

imagery referencing a heritage associated with simplicity, concerns of peace, and a rural lifestyle. The 'plain' coat, women's head coverings, quilt patterns, and the dove—a symbol of peace—are but a few examples of Mennonite iconography.

"Most of all, I am concerned about not exploiting these themes for purposes of nostalgia or commercialization. What is sought is an informed visual expression, which reflects integrity of purpose, a concern for formal painting issues, and artistic invention by one who has lived his life in the Mennonite community.

"As a painter privileged to have had graduate studies in fine arts, I want to seek and express that unique vision which a lifetime of Mennonite experience affords. The Mennonite community has never really emphasized serious art making and continues to be skeptical about its value. The challenge for me is to remain honest to a personal aesthetic, pay homage to a nurturing community, and explore a visual arena that is symbolic, iconographic, and spiritual." *D*

## Mennonite Historical Bulletin

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